**ABSTRACT** 

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PROSTITUTION IN SOUTH KOREA: TRANS/FORMATION AND RESISTANCE

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This dissertation examines the historical construction and transformation of U.S. camptown prostitution (*kijich'on* prostitution) in South Korea. Wrought by Japanese colonialism, U.S. military occupation, national division, and the Korean War, camptown prostitution has been historically constructed and reconstructed within a complex web of dynamic power relations between/among nation-states, subjects, and NGOs. This is a study of U.S. camptown prostitution, however, which is not just about military prostitution. Rather, it is a study of the power dynamics inherent in the material basis and the discursive formations that make the phenomenon, *kijich'on* prostitution, substantial. As such, this study analyzes the multiple intersections of structures of power that constitute the *kijich'on*.

The purpose of this study is 1) to provide a geneology to explain the sociohistorical phases of camptown prostitution, 2) to gauge the impacts of inter-state relations, U.S. military policy, and (inter)national policies on the *kijich'on* and kijich'on prostitution, 3) to trace the roles and activities of Korean NGOs and women's organizations with regard to kijich'on prostitution, and finally 4) to understand the triangular relationship among the nation-states, women subjects, and movement organizations in (re)constructing kijich'on prostitution as both material reality and symbolic metaphor. Thus, the research questions at the center of this dissertation are directed towards four themes: historicizing kijich'on prostitution, understanding the role of the nation-states and NGOs in the process of construction and transformation of the kijich'on, deconstructing the policies that have impacted kijich'on prostitution and the women's movement against kijich'on prostitution. In order to answer these questions, this study employs multiple methods of gathering information and analysis, including archival research, participant observation, indepth interviews, and textual analysis.

Utilizing gender as a *crucial* analytical category, this dissertation contributes not only to an understanding of camptown prostitution, but also to the theoretical conceptualization of military prostitution, feminist radical theories of gender, race, and nation, and the trans/national feminist movements.

# THE CONSTRUCTION OF U.S. CAMPTOWN PROSTITUTION IN SOUTH KOREA: TRANS/FORMATION AND RESISTANCE

By

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2006

**Advisory Committee:** 

Professor Seung-kyung Kim, Chair Professor Claire Moses Professor Deborah Rosenfelt Professor Shawn Parry-Giles Professor Linda Aldoory © Copyright by Na Young Lee 2006

# Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Park Jin Lee and Jong Sun Byun, who have been my lifelong supporters and believers. This dissertation is also dedicated to my two sons, Myung Joon Moon and Sang Joon Moon, who have been my joy, hope, and life.

### Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the many women who helped me in my long journey to become a feminist scholar. First and foremost, I would like to thank the women working inside/outside U.S. camptowns in South Korea who shared their stories with me. Although I cannot name them individually, I would like to express my deep gratitude to them.

The M.A. program in Women's Studies at Silla University, Korea, provided an opportunity for me to read a broad range of feminist texts. The Program also gave me an opportunity to learn how to become a feminist teacher: I would not have been able to teach an Introduction to Women's Studies course during my third year at the University of Maryland without the teaching experience that I gained in Korea. I am grateful to Dr. Ki-sook Lee who encouraged me to continue my doctoral study, and who has been supportive throughout my graduate career in the U.S.

Over the past five years while I have been a graduate student in the Department of Women's Studies at the University of Maryland, I have been blessed with kind friends, supportive colleagues, and generous teachers. From the first day of class to the day of my dissertation defense, everyone in the Department has always been most generous with their time, advice, and support. First, I would like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Seung-kyung Kim, Dr. Claire Moses, Dr. Deborah Rosenfelt, Dr. Shawn Parry-Giles, and Dr. Linda Aldoory for their unending care, valuable input, and constructive advice for this dissertation. They have both my gratitude and my deepest respect. I owe the most gratitude to my mentor and

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I owe much to all faculty, graduate students, and staff members in the department of Women's Studies at the University of Maryland that provided me with a generous, encouraging, and supportive intellectual home. The Professors in Women's Studies— Dr. Bonnie Thornton Dill, Dr. Lynn Bolles, Dr. Elsa Barkley Brown, Dr. Katie King, and Dr. Ruth Zambrana— have guided me to be a good feminist teacher, researcher, and activist. Without their intellectual help and emotional support, this dissertation would not have been brought to life. My journey would not have been possible without the community of graduate students at the University of Maryland. So many friends have been encouraging and supportive while I struggled to survive in U.S academia. My gratitude goes to Laura Logie, Heather Relllihan, Joy Sapinoso, Ayu Saraswati, Nikki Stewart, and Sarah Tillery who helped me navigate the first year graduate school. I would also like to thank my colleagues, Vrushali Patil, Robyn Allison Epstein, and Kimberlee Staking who have been great friends. This dissertation has benefited greatly from valuable theoretical

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I would also like to share a moment of joy with my compatriots who have gone through hard times with me as international graduate students in the United States. They are my sisters and brothers—Yukyung Yeo, Ghada Al-Madbouh, Seong-hun Yun, Heshin Yun, and Jaekwon Suh.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents, Park Jin Lee and Jong Sun Byun, who have lived with me, and my children in the U.S. in order for me to concentrate on my study. Five years is a long period to be away from Korea even if it is for their daughter's study. Without their sacrifice, it would not have been possible for me to finish my study and my dissertation this fast. My sons, Myung Joon and Sang Joon, have supported my intellectual journey with great understanding that makes me proud of, and I would like to thank them.

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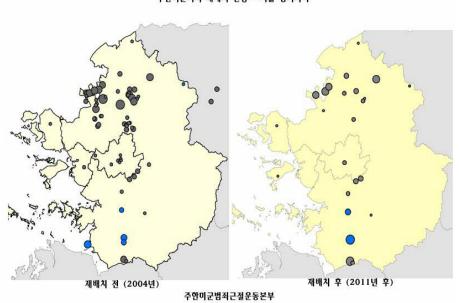
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## List of Abbreviations and Glossary

AALP Association for Abolition of Licensed Prostitution

AFPAC Allied Forces Pacific Area Command
CNM Committee of Nogullri to Maehyangri
DOS United States Department of State
IOM International Organization for Migration

JCMWK Joint Committee of Migrant Workers in Korea

KAFS Korean American Friendship Society KCIA Korean Central Intelligence Agency

KCPT Pan-South Korea Solution Committee against U.S. Base Extension in

Pyeongtaek

KCWU Korean Church Women United

KITC Korea International Tourism Corporation
KNTO Korea National Tourism Organization
KSTA Korea Special Tourism Association
KWAU Korean Women's Associations United
KWDI Korean Women's Development Institute
MOGE Ministry of Gender Equality in South Korea

MOGEF Ministry of Gender Equality & Family in South Korea

ROKA Republic of Korea Army

SKIG South Korean Interim Government SKNC South Korean National Constabulary

SKILA South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly

STA Special Tourism Association

URAWO United Relief Association of Women's Organizations

USAFIK United States Armed Forces in Korea

USAMGIK United States Army Military Government in Korea

USFK United States Forces in Korea

Chong-Dae-Hyup: A representative organization of the *chongsindae* movement.

Durebang (My Sister's Place): One of the most influential women's organizations regarding camptown prostitution.

Hansori (One Voice): An umbrella organization of women's organizations engaged in the anti-prostitution movement.

National Campaign: National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea.

Saeumto (Sprouting Land): Another influential women's organization regarding camptown prostitution.

### Chapter 1: Introduction

#### 1.1. Reflection: Detour but Useful Journey

It was summer of 2004 when I started my first day as a volunteer worker at Durebang in South Korea. Durebang, or My Sister's Place, is one of the most influential women's organizations regarding camptown prostitution in South Korea (hereafter *kijich'on* prostitution), functioning as a community as well as counseling center for women living with, married to, or servicing U.S. soldiers in Ŭijŏngbu City (2004) Pamphlet of Durebang). I took a subway and had to transfer to a bus to get to the office of Durebang, and it took me around two hours from the center of Seoul. When getting out of the subway station of Uijŏngbu, I was surrounded by the gigantic wall of two U.S bases. They were standing like bulwarks that seemed to protect the entrance of the city and the whole country of South Korea. Walking alongside the long fence, passing two armed U.S. soldiers standing in the main gate of the base, and even taking another bus to get to Durebang, I was being captured by the unexplainable feeling: unavoidable eyes kept tracing and watching me as a stranger. According to one of the residents in Uijongbu city, if a woman says she lives there, people living outside Ŭijŏngbu cast a look at her with a suspicion that she might be a yanggongju ("Western princess"): the dark shadow of the longstanding kijich'on's image. The curious eyes might suspect the woman in "unconventional" clothes in the kijich'on as a (non)yanggongju.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I will use the terms "camptown prostitution" and "military prostitution" interchangeably with "*kijich'on* prostitution." The term "U.S. camptowns" is also interchangeably used with *kijich'on* for this dissertation.

When I arrived at Gosan-dong, the small town in which Durebang is located, another U.S. base, Camp Stanley, blocked my view. The presumably idiosyncratic scene prompted the recognition that it was virtually my first-ever encounter with the U.S. camp. This was the first recognition of my profound ignorance of camptowns as well as disjuncture between the real context and ideal goal of the dissertation project. This small town was called *ppaet-pŏl*. It originates from *bae-bat* (pear garden), since the area had once been well known for its fertile pear gardens. But *ppaet-pŏl* is a local nickname of Ŭijŏngbu camptown, which means a swamp-like area where once entered, it is impossible to escape.<sup>2</sup> The *ppaet-pŏl* symbolizes the last home for *yanggongju* to belong to, which still accommodates 2,000 U.S. soldiers and approximately 100 prostitutes, according to Yu Young Rim, director of Durebang. Durebang was there in the center of *ppaet-pŏl*. I entered the run-down cement building that used to be a government-run health clinic for the purpose of women's regular checkups of sexually transmitted diseases.

As I got used to the "new" environment and came to know *kijich'on* women, I was faced with another juncture between myself and camptown prostitutes. Every day I ran into Russian women, Filipinas, and Korean former prostitutes either on the street or in Durebang. Whether their need seemed to be urgent or trivial for me, the "problems" pertaining to pregnancy, abortion, abuse, laundry, legal aid, interpretation as well as translation, and even inquiry for a baby bed, were really necessities for them to survive daily life. In this sense, offering physical, material, legal, and emotional aids to those in need is crucial for Durebang's activism. Grand discourse,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> It is also the title of a 1996 novel about camptown life written by Ahn Il Soon (Seoul: Konggan Media)

ideology, or theory was neither useful nor heard. What I could do was just to work as one of the "regular" staff members, going back and forth to a hospital, the city hall, the immigration bureau, and other women's organizations. At times I had to translate foreign documents into Korean or interpret English into Korean. Locating cheap goods to take care of women's babies or low-priced lodging places were rather pleasant experiences. It was a process for me to break down my prejudice against military prostitutes, to cross the class boundary, and eventually debunk the presumption of what a "good" feminist researcher is.

The decisive concentration of the fieldwork was my three-day stay in Tongduch'ŏn in early August, as part of Durebang's outreach program. I met several Russian and Filipina prostitutes at bars and clubs every night, and I believed that it was time to ask them something for my project with regard to the circumstances that led them to cross national borders and become camptown prostitutes, the material conditions, and the extent of violence. However, on the third night, Natasha (a twenty-two-year old Russian, pseudonym)<sup>3</sup> abruptly asked me with drunken voice, "What do you want? I want a real friend, rather than pseudo-friend, who can listen to me and to whom I can talk. But what do you want, Nayoung?" It struck me and resonated through the whole summer. I recognized the significant barrier in the field was not my different identity of class, nationality, or language, but my "murky" intention: to utilize their experiences for my future career. My involvement in the *kijich'on* was undeniably driven by academic curiosity. It was a recognition that I was about to engage in the politics of representation through my project.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> All interviewees' names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

It was ironic, given that I had devoted myself to postcolonial feminist perspectives on listening to (Fine 1998), talking with (Lal 1999), and speaking to (Spivak 1988) those Othered in order to critique androcentric and Eurocentric ways of otherization through the politics of representation. It was also ironic that my field had engaged in the theories against Othering and technologies to scrutinize the otherization. But still I was eager to know the Other or to give voice to the Other. According to Sara Ahmed (2000), "[d]ifferences, as markers of power, are not determined in the 'space' of the particular or the general, but in the very determination of their historical relation" (8-9). The difference between my own social and material status and that of camptown prostitutes is deeply embedded in Korean history and historical relations between/among Koreans, Americans, prostitutes, and "ordinary" people. Yet, I was convinced that I dared to overcome the difference, the marker of power belonged to me, and that their experiences could be visible by "my feminism." It was an attempt to universalize the identity of the particular group of prostitutes, which would obscure "the contradictory and contested process by which they have been conceptualized and by which diverse kinds of subject-positions were assigned" (Scott 1999b, 88-89).

I have shared the belief with feminists that women's experience brings into public discussion questions and concerns excluded in dominant ideologies, and women's narrating their lived experiences enables us to rethink and rearticulate obscured painful memories (Stone-Mediatore 2000, 120). However, when faced with the "real" and "living," I became determined to give up the project of making the experience of Others visible "which may reproduce the given ideological systems and

its terms" (Scott 1999b, 82-83). How dare I understand the detailed tissues of the prostitutes' daily lives woven through violence, hatred, love, joy, small victories, and negotiations? How dare I/eye analyze their experiences constituted by presumably ambivalent, illogical, and unreadable historicity?

Since then, my focus has shifted from investigating women's experiences into analyzing productions of the social, economic, and political reality of the *kijich'on* prostitution as complex, contradictory processes. This experience also provides the foundation of my argument *against* the idea of *a single* distinctive feminist method of research. Instead of hanging onto the illusion of a single distinctive feminist method or the time-consuming defense for a distinctive women's studies methodology, I identify myself as *a feminist doing interpretive and interdisciplinary research* (Reinharz 1992, 7).<sup>5</sup>

This is a study of U.S. camptown prostitution, but not just about military prostitution. Rather, it is a study of the power dynamics inherent in offering the material bases as well as the discursive formations that make the phenomenon, *kijich'on* prostitution, substantial. Chandra Mohanty (1991b) asks feminists to understand and analyze how the intersections of the various systems of domination operate and position women differently at particular historical conjunctures through

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Although I situate women's experiences and voices at the core of my research, I had to admit that merely taking experience into account does not reflect on how that experience came to be. As Joan Scott (1998) argues, experience is "not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced" (83). That is, she emphasizes the need to historicize and contextualize experience and the identities it produces. Otherwise, "oppressive systems are replicated rather than criticized in the unquestioning reliance on 'experience'" (Olsen 1998, 320).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It is interpretive because I share with feminist researchers the assumption of "intersubjectivity" between researchers and participants (informants), the interest of empowering women, not exploiting women as research 'subjects,' and ongoing struggle against the very "I" who would interpret women's experiences and socio-historical contexts in which women have been (are) situated.

setting up of historically specific "relations of ruling," and how "dynamic oppositional agency" of individuals and collectives respond to them (14). Drawing on Mohanty, this dissertation analyzes the multiple intersections of structures of power that construct the *kijich'on*. Rather than positing any simple relation of colonizer and colonized, wrongdoers and victims, or subjects and objects, this project explores the ways in which the *kijich'on* has been formed and transformed with an emphasis on the *process* of ruling and resistance.

#### 1.2. Sociopolitical Context

#### Scene #1

In 2003, the U.S. announced a plan to move most U.S. troops away from the frontline with North Korea towards forty-five miles south of Seoul by 2008. As part of a global review designed to produce a more agile fighting force, the U.S. began a reduction and realignment of U.S. forces in South Korea (<u>Asia and Pacific Rim</u> 8 March, 2005). Due to the change in U.S. military strategy for rapid deployment forces to focus increasingly on anti-terrorism operations, the so-called "Strategic Flexibility," some 12,500 troops are slated to depart by 2008, leaving 24,500 soldiers in South Korea (<u>The Star 9 March</u>, 2005) (picture 2).

#### Scene #2

In fall 2004, a group of prostitutes working predominantly in brothels waged a hunger strike in front of the South Korean national assembly, spreading flyers conveying

<sup>6</sup> The war on Iraq temporarily forced a reduction in the number of U.S. troops from 37,500 to 32,500 in 2004 (National Campaign 2006).

their message about "the right to live" and "the right to work" (<u>Hankyoreh</u> 10 October, 2004; <u>Daily Sports</u> 1 October, 2004). In the aftermath of the implementation of an anti-prostitution law in September 2004, they resisted government measures designed to crack down on "traditional brothels" located in red-light districts (i.e. prostitution concentration areas) rather than on covert forms of prostitution such as those arranged in cafés, room-salons, or bars that cater high-class clients. The prostitutes' protests began in October 2004 and continued well into 2005 (picture 3).

#### Scene #3

On May 4, 2006, 11,500 uniformed police officers, 2,800 soldiers, and 600 part-time armed workers performed an operation called "Hwangsaeul of Dawn" in Daechu-ri and Dodu-ri in P'yŏngt'aek city in South Korea. Hwangsaeul is a field area where the U.S. Armed Forces in Korea plans to expand its military bases. The operational targets were farmers and civilians who, intending to continue their livelihoods in P'yŏngt'aek, refused the government order to leave. Armed forces entered the area early in the morning and cracked down on the civilians who had gathered in an elementary school. Within ten hours, 524 civilians were arrested and approximately three hundred were injured. It had been twenty-six years since any military operation had been conducted against civilians in Korea (KCPT 2006) (picture 4).

From scenes #1 and #3, we can get a glimpse of how Korea's sovereignty and nationalism are interrelated with U.S. occupation and militarism. Despite the U.S.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> In 1980, the Korean military proceeded to Kwangju city to quell the protest by thousands of prodemocracy activists of the seizure of power by General Chun Doo Hwan. Known alternatively as the Kwangju massacre or Kwangju Democratization Movement, this incident will be explained in detail in chapter 5.

pledge to reduce its troops within the territorial borders of South Korea, its "commitment to defending" South Korea would not lessen, as a senior defense official with the U.S. military admits, due to advanced modern technology to allow more defense capability of the U.S. with fewer troops (Garamone, 2006). The commitment of the U.S. military to remain in South Korea is evidenced in the third scene of P'yŏngt'aek in which Yongsan garrison in Seoul and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division in Tongduch'ŏn will be relocated under the name of "Strategic Flexibility" (Hankyoreh 12 June, 2003). The consolidated but more expanded base will occupy approximately 6,560 acres of P'yŏngt'aek, most of which are residential or farming areas (KCPT 2006). And the fact that the Korean government supports the U.S. plan with military suppression of civilian protests supposedly reflects Korea's vulnerable status in the conflict zone of Northeast Asia, which simultaneously exposes to some extent that Korea is involved in the world competition of militarization. At the same time, divergent opinions and conflicts apparent over the P'yongt'aek issues, e.g., confrontation between NGOs and the government, residents and the U.S. and Korean governments, and NGOs and some residents who oppose the first group of NGOs' protests that allegedly affect local business negatively, fairly mirror the growth of Korea's economy as well as civil society.8

However, the scenes do not tell any stories about P'yŏngt'aek as one of the biggest and oldest camptowns, which has been notorious for military prostitution

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Two taxi drivers whom I met in P'yŏngt'aek in November 2004 exemplify opposite perspectives among civilians on the relocation of U.S. troops. One complained that NGO demonstrations would halt the relocation of U.S. troops and negatively impact local businesses. He labeled NGO protestors ungrateful for what the U.S. had done for Korea. On the contrary, the other taxi driver opposed the consolidation of U.S. troops into P'yŏngt'aek, which would cause the growth of the sex industry there, and eventually distort the regional economy and damage its reputation as well.

throughout Korea's modern history. The city is constituted by several villages including Songt'an, Anjŏng-ri, and Sinjang-dong adjoining Osan Air Base and Camp Humphreys, around which brothels, bars, and clubs are congregated. Although the living means of those working at brothels, bars, and clubs is solely reliant on the existence of U.S. soldiers, the issue of prostitutes' relocation has not been raised by either Korean nationalist NGOs or by the government. And the ambivalent judiciary measures taken against prostitution that have never reached the U.S. occupying spaces has also not been questioned.

My dissertation launches from these three seemingly discrete, un/related, and/or contradictory scenes, attending to the junction where three subjects (e.g. nation-states, NGOs, and women) encounter each other as crucial actors that cut across time and space, finally meeting at the imagined and material site of U.S. camptown prostitution (*kijich'on* prostitution), which represents the U.S. military occupation over Korea, underlies Korean peoples' resistance to U.S. imperialism, and constitutes prostitutes' daily lives.<sup>10</sup>

#### 1.3. Historical Context

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> P'yŏngt'aek is a symbol of Korea's modern history, e.g., the invasion of foreign forces in Korea. The military facilities in P'yŏngt'aek, which had been built by the Japanese military after World War I, were greatly expanded after the U.S. military government took over control from the Japanese in 1945. The military compound and its outlying areas encompassed 3,708 acres in 2006 (Pan-South Korea Solution Committee against U.S. Base Extension in P'yŏngt'aek (KCPT), 2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The term "prostitute" is used in this dissertation to refer to women who sell sex for money, as it is a more comprehensive and historically embedded term, free from any specific interest. At times, however, the term "sex workers" is used in order to highlight the location of those engaged in the sex industry as working people. For further discussion of the idea of "sex worker" that is related to other income-generating activities for women in patriarchal capitalistic societies, see Kamala Kempadoo and Jo Doezema (1998).

The history of U.S. military presence in South Korea began in September 1945 when the 24<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, consisting of some 70,000 soldiers, and led by General John R. Hodge arrived to transfer power from the Japanese colonial empire. Since then, the presence of American soldiers along with military bases has been an ongoing feature of Korean society. The number of U.S. bases and military facilities has fluctuated and is dependent upon what counts as a military base, when it is investigated, and by whom. It is also hard to know the exact number, as the existence of some military installations remains top secret. According to a Korean NGO, 101 military facilities, including fifty camps, occupy the Korean territory like a complex map (National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea 2005; http://www.usacrime.or.kr/). 11 The land used by the U.S. forces covers 6,770 thousand pyeongs (one pyeong equals 3.3 square meters). As of 2004, there were ninety-four U.S. military facilities (DacuInfo 2004, 10) and in 2006, twenty-nine main bases were officially identified (USFK, 2006). 12 Despite the change in the number of facilities as the political atmosphere has changed over time, U.S. troops in South Korea had historically numbered no less than 35,000 until the early 2000s. Given that the U.S. had over 730 military installations and military bases in over fifty

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> According to the Base Structure Report released by DoD in 2004, the total number of bases is 101 occupying 59.976 acres (24,271 ha) (<a href="http://usacrime.or.kr/">http://usacrime.or.kr/</a>). The Department of Defense in Korea report of 2002 noted a total of 92 bases and 24,617 ha.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> According to the Global Security Organization, U.S. forces in 2000 in Korea are scattered across forty-one troop installations, and an additional fifty-five small camps and support sites. Similarly, a military officer of the U.S. 8th Army identified ninety facilities related to the U.S. troops in South Korea [in 2000]. They involve forty-one main bases, thirty-eight military communication installations and eleven training camps

<sup>(</sup>http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/korea-intro.htm).

countries around the world in 2003 (picture 5), and Korea technically remains in a state of war, <sup>13</sup> the number of bases may not be so striking (Global Security 2006). <sup>14</sup>

Camptowns have developed around the main U.S. bases such as P'yŏngt'aek, P'aju, Tongduch'ŏn, and Ŭijŏngbu. They are usually commercial districts of small villages solely dependent on a U.S. military customer base, filled with clubs, bars, convenience stores, pawnshops, barbershops, tailor shops, photo and portrait shops, and drug stores. Particularly, the heavy concentration of clubs, bars, and brothels catering to GIs who rest and recreate during off-duty hours encourages the construction of small villages into the *kijich'on*: the web of the military-dependent economy.

According to a 2001 report by Korean NGOs, twenty-two out of thirty-four U.S. military bases are located only in Kyŏnggi Province alone, around which most camptowns have been developed (Saeumto 2001b, 77; KWAU 2002a, 5) (picture 6). Camptowns in the Northern Kyŏnggi Province are concentrated in four cities including Tongduch'ŏn, P'yŏngt'aek, P'aju, and Ŭijŏngbu, where 44.9 percent of the prostitution areas and 61.4 percent of prostitutes out of those in Kyŏnggi Province are located (Saeumto 2001b, 63). 15

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Because the Korean War ended in a cease-fire and not a peace treaty, the Korean peninsula is still under the armistice agreement signed by North Korea, China, the Soviet Union, and the United States in 1953 right after the Korean War.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> U.S. military bases will be reorganized into twenty-three by 2011 (<a href="http://usacrime.or.kr/">http://usacrime.or.kr/</a>). But it does not mean an absolute reduction in troop numbers, but instead, consolidation in a fewer number of locations for a more agile fighting force (<a href="https://stars.and.stripes">Stars.and.stripes</a> 17 July, 2001).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> In fact, the number of prostitutes reaches 10.9 percent of the total population of Kyŏnggi Province (ibid.).

<Table 1. U. S. Military Bases and Prostitutes in Northern Kyŏnggi Province>

Region	No. of	Name of Bases	Nature	Names	No.	No. of
(City)	Bases			of Kijich'on	of Bars	Prostitutes
Tongduch'ŏn	4	Camp Casey Camp Hovey	2 ID	Gyangam-dong	9	116
		Camp Nimble Camp Castle		Bosan-dong	58	496
Ŭijŏngbu	8	Camp Kyle Camp Essayons Camp Red Cloud Camp Sears Camp Stanley	2 ID	Ganeung-dong	5	67
		Camp Jackson Camp La Guardia Camp Falling H2O		Gosan-dong	13	154
P'aju	2	Camp Gary Ownes Camp Giant	2 ID	Sunuri	4	18
P'yŏngt'aek	2	Osan Air Base	Air	Sinjang-dong	56	526
		Camp Humphreys	Force	Anjŏng-ri	27	192
Total	16			7	172	1,569

<Source: Saeumto 2001b, 62-76>

During the last five decades, camptown prostitution has remained tacitly condoned by the Korean government until now, because it has actually served the goals of economic development as well as the national security of Korea (Moon K. 1997). However, women in U.S. camptowns have been positioned outside Korean public consciousness and silenced behind official Korean history. U.S. camptown prostitution itself is an allegory of the destruction and poverty caused by the Korean War, and the ongoing colonial condition of Korea. It is an intolerable national shame for Korean people that the sexual domination of Korean women by *yangki* (U.S. soldiers in specific, white men in general) must exist for the sake of national security. Women in U.S. military camptowns have been called derogatory names such as *yanggalbo* ("Western whore") and *yanggongju* ("Western princess"). The demeaning treatment of the women as pariah, dirty trash, and/or fallen women, has been

necessary to justify the women's behavior as personal, to differentiate them from chaste daughters and wives, and eventually to maintain Korean national pride, *jajonshim* (Moon K. 1997, 2-10; Kim H. 1998, 175-85).

The question arises: Why and how can the space, the *kijich'on*, exist despite Korea's rapid economic and political development along with the growth of civil society accompanied by democratization? Has the *kijich'on* been a static and monolithic entity for around six decades? In fact, camptowns have shown several significant changes from the mid-1990s. Most significantly, foreign prostitutes as cheaper labor began to replace local Korean women. According to NGO research, 90 percent of women working in military prostitution in Korea as of 2004 were Russian or Filipina (Durebang 2004, 53). Beside the growing presence of these foreign women, the *kijich'on* has faced the redistribution of U.S. troops as part of a global review designed to produce a more agile fighting force, which resulted in the realignment of camptowns as well as in the relocation of prostitutes. An enduring paradox is that the *kijich'on* still exists as a reality in postcolonial Korea regardless of numerous resistance movements from within and changing forces from outside.

#### 1.4. Research Questions

The research questions at the center of this dissertation are directed towards four themes: historicizing *kijich'on* prostitution, the role of the nation-state and NGOs in the process of construction and transformation of the *kijich'on*, the nature of policies

that have impacted *kijich'on* prostitution, and the role of the women's movement against *kijich'on* prostitution. Specifically, I pose the following questions:

- What is *kijich'on* prostitution, and what is the *kijich'on* movement?
- How has the *kijich* 'on emerged, and (how) has it been transformed?
- Who/what have been the major actors in the dynamics of power relations that
  have induced changes in the *kijich'on* system during specific historical
  periods?
- What kind of new politics emerge from the interactions and negotiations among the actors?
- And lastly, what effects have Korean nationalism, militarism,
   democratization, and globalization had on *kijich'on* prostitution as a practice
   and movement?

#### 1.5. Feminist Epistemology, Methodology, and Methods

The purpose of this study is 1) to provide a geneology to explain the socio-historical phases in constructing camptown prostitution, 2) to gauge the impacts of interstate relations, U.S. miltiary policy, and (inter)national policies on the *kijich'on* and *kijich'on* prostitution, 3) to trace the roles and activities of Korean NGOs and women's organizations with regard to *kijich'on* prostitution, and finally 4) to understand the triangular relationship among the nation-stations, woman subjects, and movement organizations in (re)constructing *kijich'on* prostitution as both material reality and symbolic metaphor. Multiple methods of gathering information and

analysis are employed to meet this end, including archival research, participant observation, in-depth interviews, and textual analysis.

According to Sandra Harding (1987), a research method is "a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence" (2). Through such evidence-gathering techniques, I carried out varied methods such as "listening to (or interrogating) informants, observing behavior, or examining historical traces and records" that androcentric researchers have also used (ibid., 2). However, for feminists, the matter is not just about the use of technique itself to be identified as distinctive features of feminist research, but instead, "new uses" of familiar research techniques for the transformation of androcentric academic fields specifically and society as a whole. That is, the question is how existing theoretical approaches are designed for women and applied to understand women's experiences to legitimate women's knowledge production.<sup>16</sup>

Particularly for me, an aspiration for feminist interdisciplinarity sheds light on the way of my journey as a feminist researcher. Interdisciplinarity can be defined as "a means of solving problems and answering questions that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using single methods or approaches" (Klein 1990, 196). Despite the evident accomplishments and strong presence of feminist scholarship within existing disciplines, it is through interdisciplinarity that feminist scholars could make their most revolutionary contribution to understanding gender and women's lives (Finger and Rosner 2001, 500). <sup>17</sup> Drawing on Patricia Collins (1998), feminist

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> This is why discussions of method and methodology (a theory and analysis of how research should proceed) have been intertwined with each other and with epistemological issues (issues about an adequate theory of knowledge or justificatory strategy) (Harding 1987, 2-3).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> In effect, Women's Studies was born out of an interdisciplinary mission: to expose the male biases

interdisciplinarity provides "an interpretive framework for thinking through how intersections of race and class, or race and gender, or sexuality and class, for example, shape any group's experience across specific contexts" (208). A feminist differential form of interdisciplinarity does not refer to just adapting, combining, or mingling several parts of disciplinary analytical or methodological tools, but rather, as Chéla Sandoval (2000) posits, critical conflation of the presumably distinctive tools is necessary for feminist interdisciplinarity to develop "integrative, synthesizing, erudite, boundary-crossing, comparative, and interrogative problem-focused scholarship" (Allen and Kitch 1998, 281). 18

I believe that interdisciplinary accountability is crucial for addressing and investigating new questions beyond the conventional limits of disciplines. With such a faith that the interdisciplinary aspiration would guide me to do a differential feminist research on camptown prostitution, I embarked on the field of the kijich'on. It turned out that the entire dissertation process, including the fieldwork, was (should be) an ongoing process of scrutiny to go beyond the theoretical armament: scrutiny in my assumptions, beliefs, purposes, and the results of research.

#### 1.5.1. Overview of the Research Process

entrenched in disciplinary paradigms and to challenge the barriers dividing disciplinary domains which obstructed a complete view of women's situations and social structures (Hesse-Biber et al. 1999). By exposing, dismantling, and changing the androcentric presumptions underlying the dominant academic discourses that reflect the "master's" desire and interests, feminist scholars have effectively challenged the limits of the discipline-bound production of knowledge.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Chéla Sandoval (2000) proposes that "a shared theory and method of oppositional consciousness and social movement is the strategy of articulation necessary to resolve the problematics of the disciplinization and apartheid of academic knowledges in the human and social sciences" (78). She argues for a form of "coalitional consciousness" in cultural studies that connects all the separated theoretical domains that are divided by differences of gender, race, and sexuality. She calls for a "theory uprising" that will free the methodology of the oppressed "from its repression in academic discourse" (79).

For my dissertation research, I conducted seven months of fieldwork in South Korea: July-August and October-December in 2004 and July-August in 2005. Before embarking on the fieldwork, I carried out a pilot research project in January 2004 during which time I collected secondary sources, started to build a network with feminist activists in the *kijich'on* movement, and lined up a volunteer work at Durebang for July 2004.

During the time I was in Korea, my field research included archival research, participant observation at Durebang, and in-depth interviews. The archival research at the Library of Congress in Seoul was consisted of collecting: 1) congressional records, policy statements and articles published by relevant government ministries; 2) documents and periodicals produced by NGOs; and 3) newspaper archives spanning the ideological spectrum. After coming back to the U.S., I searched for relevant documents at the National Archives II in Maryland and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

For my participant observation, I worked as a volunteer at Durebang during summer and fall of 2004: I worked every day, about six hours a day, for two months during the summer, and two days a week during the fall. I carried out in-depth interviews with thirty people during the fall, 2004 and in August 2005. I conducted seven additional follow-up interviews in August 2005.

I was able to interview staff members of organizations that deal with issues related to prostitution, *kijich'on* prostitution, and U.S. camptowns; prostitutes inside/outside the *kijich'on*; and civilians living in the *kijich'on*. Besides the in-depth interviews, I was able to meet and carry out informal conversations with a diverse

group of people including feminist activists, social movement activists, feminist scholars, and prostitutes. These informal conversations helped me understand the historical and contemporary context of camptowns and camptown prostitution, map out the complex nexus of movement organizations, and note new sources that I had neglected. I also made occasional trips to other U.S. camptowns, Tongduch'ŏn and P'yŏngt'aek, to observe the areas and meet prostitutes, bar owners, and Korean residents.

#### 1.5.2. Participant Observation and In-depth Interviews

To assess the roles and activities of Korean NGOs and women organizations with regard to *kijich'on* prostitution, and to understand the triangular relationship among the nation-stations, women subjects, and movement organizations in (re)constructing *kijich'on* prostitution, "multimethod research" was necessary, including participant observation, interviewing, and archival analysis (Reinharz 1992, 46). Particularly, fieldwork seemed necessary for me to understand *kijich'on* women and to conceptualize the *kijich'on* movement in the specific socio-political context of South Korea. Ethnographic research was made possible by my volunteering to work with Durebang during the summer of 2004. After defending my prospectus in the early October of 2004, I went to Korea again to continue the fieldwork until December of 2004. The next summer (2005) gave me additional opportunities to conduct interviews and follow-up interviews.

Participant observation was crucial for my dissertation in order to illuminate actual organizational practices within the space, e.g., daily strategies responding to

kijich 'on women's diverse experiences, the shifting society, and differing relationship with other organizations. For me, participant observation refers to an "involvement in the phenomenon" which ranges "from merely observing on the site without taking part in the activities to full participation as a member of the community or setting concerned" (van Zoonen 1994, 136). It was a dynamic, interactive, and intersubjective process in that my presence influenced the daily organizational practices that would in turn impact my presumption or practice as well. As a volunteer staff person in Durebang, I worked about six hours each day for two months in the summer, and two days per week during the fall of 2004. I functioned as an insider-outsider on the boundary between "full-engagement" and "mere observation," because I was concerned that full-engagement, especially if I became (overly) emotionally involved, could have prevented me from keeping an appropriate distance or having an "objective" understanding of the scene, and mere observation may have inhibited the intersubjective relationship between researcher and informant.

During my work with the Durebang, I paid particular attention to the organizational leadership, their way of recruiting activists as well as volunteers, how they constituted membership, and the type of interactions with other organizations. How activism is organized, how documents are produced with/without the help of the state, how public campaigns are carried out and in which contexts, and how Durebang meets other others were important subjects of observation. Additionally, I participated in various activities and events such as anti-prostitution campaigns held not only by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> The concept of the "insider-outsider" originates from Patricia Hill Collins' theorization of a particular perspective as "outsider within" (1986). Of this perspective, Collins asserts that the "outsider within" social location of Afro-American women in white dominant society has provided a special standpoint on self, family, and society for Afro-American women, and that this particular perspective is evident in Black feminist literature.

Durebang but also by Hansori (One Voice), the umbrella organization of women's organizations engaged in the anti-prostitution movement, and by Chong-Dae-Hyup, the representative organization of the *chongsindae* movement, such as the "Wednesday Meeting" every week in front of the Japanese embassy to demand the Japanese government's apology, responsibility, and remittance for comfort women (specifically, I was merely observing the sites). These were good opportunities for me to observe differences as well as commonalities within/among the activism of the *chongsindae* movement, the anti-prostitution movement, and the *kijich'on* movement. This procedure was intended to fill the gap between what was said by informants and what was read through texts.

As part of the fieldwork, I conducted in-depth interviews with selected participants in different political/generational cohorts of social movements, former and current staff members of key organizations, former and current prostitutes, civilians in the *kijich'on*, and academic scholars relevant to my topic.<sup>21</sup> Given the limited extant research on camptown prostitution in South Korea, interviews with

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> The issues of Japanese comfort women (*chongsindae*) were publicized by several feminist scholars in the late-1980s, who led to the establishment of Chong-Dae-Hyup in 1990. Since then, Chong-Dae-Hyup, the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, has led the *chongsindae* movement as an umbrella organization composed of twenty-three women's organizations. Due to the rigorous activism of Chong-Dae-Hyup, issues regarding *chongsindae* could garner public attention throughout the world.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Particularly in Korea, to examine commonalities/differences of each generation is very important to understand the political contexts of various social movements, different identities of members, shared beliefs, and strategies for action that influence the structures and agendas of organizations. According to Nancy Whittier (1995), "social movements are a fundamentally collective phenomenon. Understanding them requires us to examine commitment, identity, and generation at the *collective* level: culture, interaction, daily life, and collective identity" (16). Whittier conceptualizes "generational politics" and "collective identity" as "located in action and interaction" rather than "in individual self-conceptions, attitudes, or beliefs." The hallmarks of generational difference are interwoven into everyday life and the ways that individuals interact with each other and structure organizations (16-17).

feminist activists working in women's organizations were crucial in developing a comprehensive overview of U.S. camptowns and military prostitution.

Regarding recruiting informants, I utilized personal networks. Korea is a network society, which means people are interconnected to each other through school, regional, and other kinds of affiliations. By getting to know a nodal point of networks, one can access another group or people relatively easily. This technique, called "snowballing," enabled me to find people to interview who were able to introduce me to additional people to talk with (Potter 1996, 197). In effect, I began contacting a few people who had been connected to me through networks of school, feminist activism, or friends; and then through a series of referrals, I added more people to interview. I was lucky in that I could participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> International Meeting of the East Asia-U.S.-Puerto Rico Women's Network Against Militarism held in the Philippines in November 2004. Durebang invited me as a volunteer interpreter. I built rapport among feminist activists with regard to prostitution, which affected the quality of information exchanged and enabled me to do multiple interviews. As relationships between informants and myself developed during the intense, long conference, informants whom I had interviewed before were willing to meet with me again and provide additional information or hidden stories of the behind-the-official-scenes regarding movement activism and legislative negotiations.

In addition, a "quota sample" technique was used to fulfill a quota for different groups of people (Potter 1996, 197). I chose at least one more person from a relevant organization or movement for an effective interorganizational analysis. For example, I selected three from the migrant movement, two from the anti-American

movement, several from the prostitution movement, two from the *chongsindae* movement, some from the *kijich'on* movement, and some from other movements. All activist interviewees are Korean women. Approximately thirty persons were interviewed between October and December 2004 (with seven follow-up interviews in 2004-5), most of which took place in offices of organizations, public spaces on campuses, homes of participants, or restaurants, and usually lasted over one hour. All formal interviews were transcribed. Based upon the recurrent patterns of ideas showed in the transcripts, I could map the women's movements, social movements, and their relationships with the *kijich'on*. The transcripts also provided me with ample information of the *kijich'on*, as well as the *kijich'on* movement activism.

Since I was particularly interested in understanding the interactions and the underlying dynamics among people, organizations, and movements, I focused on the following issues for activists: what are the causes of individual/collective involvement in the movements, and when and how did they become involved; what are the internal relationships among people in different NGO communities; which factors are more influential on the changes of organizational strategies and tactics; how/when are linkages engendered and resolved; and what is (was) at stake within/outside the organizations. In-depth interviews were also important in order to bridge gaps, e.g., between the public rhetoric of prostitution and inner perception of prostitution as well as camptown prostitution in women's movements, or between the official doctrine like "unity" and the inner hegemonic power relationships among sectors of the NGO community.

In-depth interviews were open-ended. To balance the advantages and disadvantages of the open-ended interviews, semi-structured interviews were conducted at times.<sup>22</sup> I employed "floating' prompts intended to elicit more information about the conversation topic, and 'planned' prompts aimed at discovering the participant's ideas about topics that are relevant to the research subject" (e.g. when did you get involved in the organization/why/how?) (van Zoonen 1994, 137).

My conversations with camptown prostitutes were conducted primarily in Tongduch'ŏn and Ŭijŏngbu. My questions and strategies were intentionally unstructured, and the time and place of interviews varied. I followed my intuition without any planned strategies. Although I did have a series of planned questions, I could not follow the formatted questionnaires, because my interview subjects disliked that sort of structured format of questioning, and even became frozen with the provided "Informed Consent Form." Because the majority of foreign prostitutes were illegal or overstayed migrant workers, they were concerned if the written form or record would be utilized against their will and situation. Sample questions, protocol, and/or any previous knowledge of utilizing methods learned from academia were useless in the real setting. Not asking questions, therefore, I would be engaged in informal conversations between "us" and among prostitutes. At times I visited bars or clubs around midnight to observe how they were working and to talk to them naturally. Occasionally I met them in a small restaurant, a convenience store, or a coffee shop when they asked for "help." In Durebang, I encountered them on a daily

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> According to van Zoonen (1994), "the particular interpretation of the theme and the direction of the conversation depend entirely on the informant without any interruption by the researcher" (136-37). Because they involve the relatively "unstructured conversations with informants about the subject of inquiry," however, this method may have disadvantages given "a lack of comparability and an abundance of information of which the relevance to the research subject may be unclear" (ibid.).

basis or in bars drinking at night, but I refrained from asking questions solely based upon my academic curiosity. Once they called me in need for help, I went out and met them in a place they designated. This process is reflected in the first section.

## 1.5.3. Archival Research and Textual Analysis

To trace the roots and transformation of camptown prostitution, histories of Japanese colonial rule over Korea, the Korean War, the larger cold war context, and the U.S. military presence in South Korea as they pertain to the *kijich'on* are important for this study. As this history covers approximately one century, contemporary information that can be obtained through Internet websites or existing organizations is not adequate. Particularly, to satisfy two aims of this disseration, archival research was necessary: to provide a genology to explain the socio-historical phases in constructing camptown prostutution and to gauge the impacts of interstate relations, U.S. military policy, and (inter)national policies concerning the *kijich'on*. Research on primary sources took place in Seoul, Maryland, and Washington D.C.

In summer and fall 2004, I consulted legislative records, laws, newspaper articles, and other secondary sources pertaining to U.S. camptowns, *kijich'on* prostitution, *kisaeng* tourism, Japanese licensed prostitution, and the sex industry. When I started to locate records regarding the "*kijich'on*" at the Library of Congress in Seoul, South Korea, what I could find were just a few newspaper articles. After spending several days, I recognized that "*kijich'on* prostitute" had not been an "official" word accepted in the public before the 1980s. Instead, *wianbu* and *yanggongju* operated as the official terminology to indicate prostitutes in U.S.

camptowns. As *wianbu* referred to Japanese comfort women during World War II, and *yanggongju* (Western princess) was an unofficial as well as derogatory term to justify mistreatments against these women, at least for "my generation of feminists," I had not imagined that these two terms were so widely used from the mid-1940s through 1970s. My primary challenge in this portion of the research was to wrestle with which terms were used when and by whom to describe and analyze the complex histories for which I was searching.

In order to work through this problem, I began by (re)combining several distinctive words such as *kisaeng* (Korea's traditional form of female entertainer), *yanggongju*, *wianbu*, *kijich'on*, U.S. military base (*mikun-kiji*), and the sex industry (*ssŏng-sanŏp*). Through this process, I learned that the history of *kijich'on* and *kijich'on* women has been continuously (re)constructed for those who want to hear just what they want to see, e.g., the governments, NGOs, and Korean people. *Kijich'on* women's experiences, as a collective symbol of *yanggongju*, have been selectively chosen, partially seen, and arbitrarily interpreted throughout Korea's modern history. The meaning of *kijich'on* prostitution itself has shifted as the society, politics, and economy of Korea have changed.

The most exciting archival finding was housed at the U.S. National Archives. Upon my return to Maryland, I spent two months in 2005 at the National Archives II to locate U.S. government reports of camptown prostitution in South Korea. Even with the assistance of two librarians, who were experts in Korea and the U.S. military, I struggled to locate records because the existence of and U.S. involvement in

military camptown culture has never been acknowledged in the official history of either U.S. military engagement or foreign relations. Finally, I found a rich source concerning military prostitution from a huge number of files on the "venereal diseases" of American soldiers serving overseas. Because I assumed that the U.S. military must have recorded its soldiers' heath issues that might negatively impact wartime efficiency, and the assumption was correct. I unearthed the VD committee meeting reports recorded by the U.S. military government in South Korea (1945-48) from the files on the "venereal diseases" which had been classified as "top-secret." These declassified reports provided excellent information regarding the emergence of *kijich'on* prostitution as well as U.S. policies to control prostitutes in South Korea. Women in *kijich'on* were subject to VD control for the sake of American soldiers' health and security. They were identified as potential VD disseminators or seducers instead of *yanggongju* or *wianbu*.

The newspaper archives, particularly for the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, released before 2000, were obtained from the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland offered me unexpected materials regarding the activities of the South Korea Interim Government (1947-48) recorded by the United States Army Forces in Korea for the purpose of a regular report to the White House, where I could consult initial laws of women's issues as well as activities of the Women Bureau, the U.S perspectives of Korea, Korean women, and prostitutes in those days, and the U.S. policy to outlaw the licensed prostitution.

I used newsletters, pamphlets, documents, and other relevant materials originating from Durebang, Saeumto, Chong-Dae-Hyup, Hansori, the National Campaign, <sup>23</sup> KCWU (the Korean Church Women United), <sup>24</sup> and KWAU (the Korean Women's Associations United)<sup>25</sup> to understand the shifting politics of women's movements and detailed strategies regarding the *kijich'on* considering the social context that produced them (e.g. who they are [have been]; how women's organizations have positioned themselves in relation to the nation and other movements; how they understand themselves and *kijich'on* women; what their strategies and logics of movement activism regarding the *kijich'on*). As such, I sought to uncover the underlying ideologies that were projected/interjected to the practices of writing and reading, as interrogating how they are (re)produced in the procedure of production as well as consumption of the text.

Along with periodicals produced by women's organizations, I explored pamphlets, newsletters, documents, and websites originated/produced by organizations related to the anti-American movement, e.g., the National Campaign, the Committee of Nogunri to Maehyangri and the Korea Truth Commission on U.S. Military Massacres of Civilians during the Korean War. Such an examination

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> The National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea (Chuhan-mikun-bŏmjoe-kŭnjŏl-ŭndongbonbu) was launched in October 1993. Since then it has developed into a full-blown anti-American movement in South Korea. Its main organizational activism focuses on addressing crimes of U.S. troops against Korean civilians, as discussed further in Chapter 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> The Korean Church Women United (Hankuk-kyohoe-yŏsŏng-yŏnhaphoe) was established in 1968 concerning women's issues as well as human rights. The KCWU has contributed to Korean women's movements in many ways including training and fostering potential feminist activists and scholars, as well as questioning issues of prostitution and other aspects of the sex industry, effects of war on women, androcentric national policies, and the problem of war-time comfort women forced into serving Japanese soldiers. For further discussion, refer to Yi (1996, 181-92).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> The Korean Women's Associations United was formed in February 1987, during the democratic transition period in South Korea. It has functioned as the major umbrella organization of autonomous women's associations addressing numerous women's issues, as well as leading the enactment of gender-related policies, as discussed again in Chapter 5.

revealed the process of otherization of *kijich'on* prostitutes and the ideological function of nationalism within Korean civil society. To compare the synchronized texts produced by women and by men was useful as well to understand the fissures of perspectives between two genders toward *kijich'on* women and issues of U.S. camptowns. The procedure proved that the process or practice to (re)represent the women objects was that of the subject-constitution of those doing the depicting and representing. Additionally, the intersectional reading of the governmental documents and media coverage enabled me to see how the official rhetoric about *kijich'on* prostitution has been constituted and how its positionality has changed over time, and eventually to understand the hegemonic ruling process of constructing *kijich'on* prostitution.

Throughout the whole process of archival research, in conclusion, I recognized that to tell the story of U.S. camptowns and camptown prostitution is itself a politics of representation, because the notion, account, and role of the *kijich'on* and *kijich'on* prostitution have differed over time and depending on which subjects observe, record, and/or participate in the *kijich'on*. <sup>26</sup> Identities and experiences of *kijich'on* prostitutes have been continuously (re)represented and (re)constituted through the discursive competitions among the imperial "I/eye," the nationalist "I/eye," and the non-representative organizations' "I/eye." It is a politics because, first, the categories or labels to indicate military prostitutes operate as a regulatory frame congealing over time, within which behavioral constraints or criteria for

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> For the notion of the "politics of representation," I rely on Judith Butler (1999). She argues, "[P]olitics and representation are controversial terms. On the one hand, representation serves as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy to women as political subjects; on the other hand, representation is the normative function of a language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of women" (3-4).

women were already set; second, the hegemonic cultural discourses produced by nation-states as well as NGOs, as competing encoders and decoders, function as a signification to separate women's bodies into distinctive "species," and eventually produce an ontologically different substance of the Other; and third, the categories or labels intertwined with the ideologies of gender, class, race, and nation condition material lives of *kijich'on* women and (re)inform women (including *kijich'on* women and activists) to constitute their perspectives as well as identities.

The aim of this project, therefore, is neither to preclude the possibility of feminism as a representational politics, nor to reclaim a true identity of the military prostitutes as the fictive foundation for *my* feminist analytic legitimacy. Rather, at "the historical present," I attempt to scrutinize and critique how hegemonic power structures engender, naturalize, and mobilize the categorical identities of military prostitute as well as the notion of *kijich'on* prostitution, by taking into account "the constitutive powers of their own representational claims" (Butler 1999, 8-9). As such, I will demonstrate that the presumed universality of the subject/object, which is constituted by hegemonic powers, is ironically undermined by the constraints of the very representational discourses from which the possibility of reconstituting women subjects emerged.

### 1.6. Dissertation Overview

The following chapters are organized as historical phases and significant political atmospheres change in Korea. I underscore the actors that play key roles to construct

the *kijich'on* at each historical turn, as telescoping one or two superposed upon other actors. The primary division is:

- Conversations with Theories of Military Prostitution, Gendered Nationalism,
   Globalization, and Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives on Trans/National
   Politics;
- 2) Emergence of Military Prostitution: Colonial Legacies and the U.S. Military Occupation in South Korea (before the 1950s), which explores the emergence of U.S. military prostitution in South Korea based upon Japanese colonial apparatus of licensed prostitution, tracing differing hegemonic power relations between/among the U.S., Japanese, and Korean governments;
- 3) Consolidation of *Kijich'on* for National Interests (the 1950s through 1970s), which discusses the consolidation and development of *kijich'on*, examining the ways in which the South Korean government began to cooperate with U.S. interests in systematic construction and maintenance of the *kijich'on* with changes in policy ranging from *tacit permission* to *permissive promotion*, and to *active support*;
- 4) The *Kijich'on* Movement and Gendered Nationalism: Emergence, Conflict, and Negotiation (the 1980s through 1990s), which highlights the trajectory of the *kijich'on* movement during the democratic transition and consolidation, discussing its emergence, growth, and transformation;
- 5) Trans/Formation of *Kijich'on*: Transnational Prostitutes and Changes of Politics, which analyzes newly emergent politics surrounding *kijich'on* in the

era of globalization, examining transnational prostitutes as new subjects in the *kijich'on*, U.S. as well as Korean policies regarding prostitution as well as human trafficking, and NGOs' reaction and;

6) Conclusion: Toward Trans/National Feminist Politics, which discusses the implications of this dissertation for trans/national feminist politics.

Chapter 2: Conversations with Theories of Military Prostitution, Gendered Nationalism, Globalization, and Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives on Trans/National Politics

### Introduction

Camptown prostitution, the focus of this study, is situated within the context of transformations which have occurred through the intersections of interstate relations, domestic policies, gendered processes, and movements embedded in NGOs. Because women's sexual labor is entangled in a domestic patriarchy that is exercised through the state in order to control women's sexuality, I argue that the (re)construction of camptown prostitution should be explored within the parameters of the intertwined ideologies of gender, militarism, and nationalism in South Korea, rather than exclusively within those of the imperial U.S. Moreover, to understand the shifting nature of *kijich'on* prostitution in the era of globalization, theories of gendered globalization and literature on prostitution should be synthesized.

This dissertation is situated at the intersection of four broad bodies of literature: that on military prostitution, gender and nationalism, gendered globalization, and postcolonial feminist theory. In borrowing analytical and theoretical tools from political science, sociology, literature, and cultural studies, and interweaving these seemingly discrete bodies of theory, this chapter asks for *conversations* among and between Western and Korean theories. Accordingly, the theorization of the politics of *kijich'on* prostitution is itself a continuing negotiation within the boundaries of these theories.

# 2.1. Theories on Prostitution and Military Prostitution

## 2.1.1. Feminist Approaches to Prostitution

Prostitution, around which issues of body, sexuality, gender discrimination, class, and race are intertwined, has been a contentious issue for feminists (Pickup 1998; Kempadoo 1998; Doezema 1998, 2000, 2002). Differences of opinion among feminists revolve around the question of whether a woman can (ever) choose prostitution as a profession or whether she is (always) necessarily coerced.<sup>27</sup>

As the number of migrants crossing national borders has increased significantly, <sup>28</sup> and people have become concerned with the spread of disease (including HIV/AIDS) across borders, societal cohesion, and national security, some feminists have called for a more complex understanding of prostitution and more nuanced strategizing on the part of women's movements regarding globalization

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> These seemingly distinctive positions reflect three previous views on prostitution: "regulation," "abolition," and "decriminalization." In the 19th and 20th centuries, "regulation" referred to the state system of licensed brothels, in which prostitution was legal, but prostitutes were subjected to various forms of regulation, such as forced medical examinations and restrictions on mobility. The ideology behind "regulation" was that prostitution is a "necessary evil" that naturalizes male sexual desire. It is also related to a Victorian notion of the prostitute; a fallen woman, a sexual deviant, and a spreader of disease. On the other hand, "abolition" arose as a specific response to the laws adopted in most European countries (e.g. Contagious Diseases (CD) Acts in England in 1864, 1866, and 1869), which epitomized the regulationist approach to the control of prostitution through medical supervision. At that time, some feminists opposed the view of the prostitutes as fallen women or sexual deviants. Instead, they blamed male sexual lust and insisted prostitution be abolished, viewing the prostitutes as victims who should be rescued or rehabilitated. They joined the campaign against registration and regulation by "social purity" reformers, because they thought that these laws reinforced the "double standard" of sexual behavior for men and women and also gave the state additional power to police and control women's bodies. "Decriminalization" refers to the removal of all laws against prostitution or selling sex. Almost all prostitutes' rights groups in the U.S. and many contemporary feminists advocate this position, calling for the decriminalization of consensual adult sex on the grounds that laws against such sex violate civil liberties, such as the freedom of association. Particularly, they are concerned that criminalizing prostitution has resulted in horrible working conditions and violence against the women involved.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), nearly 175 million migrants are crossing borders (2001).

(Kempadoo 1998; Bertone 2000; Ruenkaew, 2002; Thorbek 2002; Kapur 2003).<sup>29</sup> These feminist analyses of prostitution challenge the existing notions of prostitution, which focus either solely on the victimization of women or blame the "victim," herself. Particularly, their attempt to contextualize women's complex positionality in given economic and geopolitical conditions highlights women's voice and agency. Such work has led to greater diversity and complexity in the feminist theorization of prostitution.

Another strand of feminist work (e.g. Jeffreys 1997; Vanaspong 2002) has focused especially on Western literature on prostitution that depicts "Third World women" as powerless, subordinate, and demoralized victims. This work argues that such a depiction of "Third World women" as helpless and so forth is based upon the first world/third world divide, either intentionally or unintentionally serving to keep the "Rest" away from the "West" (Kapur 2003, 6). These feminist authors are attentive to the ways in which the implicit and explicit binary opposition of First/Third world and the *otherization* of women of "other" nations reinforce the stereotypical image of non-Western women or so-called Third World women. The homogenizing image of Third World women not only replicates the master/subject model of power that reproduces women's identity as subordinate (Brace and O'Connell Davidson 2000, 1046), but also reflects a colonialism that epitomizes the Self/Other model of the subject. They argue that this kind of discourse functions as a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> For example, Susanne Thorbek (2002) discusses "prostitutes" in different situations and points out the danger of generalizing the experiences and conditions of migrant prostitutes. She observes that some women have been cheated or forced into the trade; others have chosen prostitution voluntarily; and some have had experience as prostitutes both at home and abroad before traveling to other regions or countries. In addition, there are differences in the legal status, types of employment, income levels, and the degree of exploitation among prostitutes. Thorbek argues that "the habitual naming of sexworkers of foreign origin as sex-slaves, debt-slaves or trafficked woman is inaccurate" (1).

mechanism to reaffirm and legitimize a single authority to speak for/of prostitutes.<sup>30</sup> This critique echoes postcolonial feminist concerns about the ways in which Western knowledge is produced. Responding to Western-centric knowledge production, postcolonial feminists have made an effort to 1) reveal the hidden desire of Eurocentric theorization "to conserve the subject of the West, or the West as Subject," while continuously constituting the colonial subject as Other (Spivak 1988, 271); 2) deconstruct the homogenizing image of "Third World women"; and 3) construct alternative feminist representations (Mohanty 1997).

Theories of prostitution are not able to address the specificities of camptown prostitution. Camptown prostitution must be disentangled from, even while simultaneously recognizing its embeddedness in, the overarching issues of prostitution. The complexity and specificity of Korean society and history here are key. One of the goals of this dissertation is to explore the multiple positionalities of *kijich'on* prostitution as a window onto tracing this historicity. Therefore, existing feminist approaches to prostitution should be synthesized with analyses of the relationships between militarism and prostitution, international politics and military prostitution, and the unique context of Korean history and society.

2.1.2. The Study of *Kijich'on* Prostitution: Going beyond Theories on Military Prostitution

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> For example, Leslie Jeffrey's pathbreaking research on prostitution in Thailand (2002) mainly explores the Western representation of Thailand and the Thai sex industry. She contends that through repetitive representations of Thai prostitute women as innocent victims of cruel cultural traditions, cultural stereotypes of Asian prostitutes and, by extension, Asian women are reproduced. As such, the Western notion of the Third World as "inert and unchanging and less developed and less capable than Western states" is also reinforced (ix).

The history of military prostitution is part of the history of prostitution in Korea and is, as such, complicated by Korea's recent history. As Yuh (2002) indicates, there is a significant linkage between Korea's political and military subjugation by foreign forces and the history of prostitution in Korea (17). The culture of military camptowns, prostitution as a way of life, and/or sex tourism has been an integral part of Korea's subordination to Japanese and American interests throughout the twentieth century (Cumings 1992, 174). Similarly, Pak (1994) contends that prostitution in Korea has been complexly structured by Japanese colonial intrusion, the Korean War, and U.S. military government rule. In the theoretical context, the presence of foreign soldiers is the decisive cause of the continued production and maintenance in Korea of prostitution generally and military prostitution specifically. Most activist critics of military prostitution in South Korea tend to view military prostitution primarily as an outcome of U.S. militarism and imperialism (National Campaign 1999; 2002; 2003; Korea Truth Commission 2002).

Similarly, the role of the U.S military in producing and maintaining camptown prostitution has been examined in a considerable volume of feminist work (Block and Thistlethwaite1996; Kirk & Okazawa-Rey 2000; Okazawa-Rey 1997; Sturdevant 2000; Sturdevant & Stoltzfus 1992). Feminists have questioned the relationship between prostitution and the policies that drive militarism, analyzing militarization's effects on local women and children and the negative role of U.S. military bases around the world. Despite these feminist scholars' contributions to illuminating the global situation of American military occupation, the thriving sex industries that have sprung up around U.S. military bases in many countries, and the oppressive nature of

camptown prostitution, their work has yet to go beyond the notion of U.S. militarism and imperialism as the main actor or agent in the construction of camptown prostitution and, consequently, the target problem to be solved. Stressing the asymmetry of interstate relationships seriously neglects the symbiotic relationships between the U.S. and local governments in perpetuating androcentric ideologies. Moreover, the highlighting of local women as helpless victims of the U.S. military overshadows the history of women's resistance to it. Not going beyond the causal linkage between military prowess and violence toward women, this line of thought replicates the master/subject model of power that reproduces women's identities as subordinate.

The exaggerated role of the U.S. is evident in the argument that "the culture of camptowns, prostitution as a way of life, and sex tourism has nothing to do with Korean culture" (Cumings 1992, 174). Such an argument focuses on the ongoing dimension of camptown prostitution, emphasizing "the continuous subordination of one female generation after another to the sexual servicing of American males" (169). The theoretical account is problematic in that it does not see camptown prostitution as having been inextricably intertwined with Korea's economy, society, and national security. It also ignores the direct and indirect cooperation of the Korean government in sustaining and transforming the *kijich'on* over time. It bypasses the historicity of camptown prostitution, which has been an integral part of international tourism as well as domestic prostitution, and of catering to the sexual desire of Others. In this line of thought, additionally, there is no room for the reality that middle- and working-class Korean women who, for various reasons, were dependent on American

solders for their livelihoods have been substituted in recent years by foreign women, who attempt to find alternative living opportunities in Korea when prospects in their own countries are bleak.

On the other hand, Korean feminist NGOs have had some significant success in bringing military prostitution into public consciousness, while also challenging patriarchal assumptions and shifting attention from personal to structural, systematical, and social problems (Durebang 1995; 2001; Hansori 2003; Saeumto 1996; 1999; 2001a; 2001b). Yet, in public discourse at least, their perspectives on prostitution have converged into the abolitionist view. For them, all forms of prostitution are inherently coerced and abusive and constitute violence against women (Shon 2004; Kim H, 2003).

Cynthia Enloe (1990; 2000) and Katharine Moon have significantly filled the gaps in the existing literature on military prostitution, situating it as a matter of international politics and national security. Exploring the relationship between militarism, sexuality, nationalism, and military policy as interlocking forces that construct and maintain military prostitution, Enloe has argued that "private" sexual relations are intimately related to international politics. Particularly, she contends that the nationalist approach to American bases makes women invisible except occasionally as symbols, a rhetorical strategy that merely serves to hide the strategic character of sexual politics (1990, 66). In a similar manner, Moon's path-breaking analysis (1997) sheds light on the ways in which complex interstate power relations affect the (re)organization of camptown prostitution, specifically focusing on the South Korean context in the early 1970s. Moon argues that a stronger state will not

always dominate and control women in a politically and economically weaker state. In particular, she expands our understanding of the resources that human actors can utilize, from money, guns, and diplomatic weight, to public opinion about "sex," and she acknowledges that military prostitutes can themselves be "players" in the politics of *kijich'on* (53).

Yet, other questions remain unanswered: How/why did U.S. camptown prostitution become entrenched in South Korea? How has the *kijich'on* changed since the 1970s? How do local people and NGOs respond to the politics surrounding camptown prostitution? Do they participate in the deconstruction of *kijich'on* prostitution or in its *re*construction? And how do feminist activists in camptowns as a collective oppositional agent respond to the hegemonic ruling powers of the United State Forces in Korea and the Korean government?

To understand the constitutive and transformative nature of the *kijich'on*, I consider the power dynamics between nation-states, NGOs, and women subjects in constituting the *politics* of *kijich'on* prostitution. The notion of *politics* helps to illuminate the actors who continue to dispute the hegemonic meanings of the *kijich'on*. I argue that the *kijich'on* has been continuously (re)constituted and reinterpreted by the interplay between/among the nation-states involved (e.g. the United States and South Korea), nationalist NGOs, women activists, and prostitutes. The notion of *hegemony* as employed by Antonio Gramsci (1971) is useful in elucidating the *kijich'on* as it is constructed through constant negotiations among and between all levels of a society over meanings, laws, and other aspects. As dominant ideologies are in tension with other forces and constantly in flux, no single class or

group of people has hegemony. Rather, hegemony is a state or condition of a culture arrived at through a negotiation or struggle over meanings, laws, and social relationships that which are constantly changing (Hall 1995, 53-54). In addition, Gramsci (1971) reminds us that the relationship between the intellectuals and the world of production is "mediated by the whole fabric of society and by the complex of superstructures, of which the intellectuals are, precisely, the 'functionaries'" (12). The relationship between civil society and the state is not merely antagonistic but also interdependent, and the boundary at times shifts as well (Moon S. 2002, 476).

In this regard, the role of Korean NGOs and women's organizations can be understood as counter-hegemonic forces, but not always as independent and liberated. This account is intended to go beyond the notion of "power over." According to Townsend et al. (1999), power over is "the power of one person or group to get another person or group to do something against their will" (26), which is enforced through physical violence, fear, economic exploitation, social rules, and/or varied ideological mechanisms. It is presumably exercised by groups of [white] men and androcentric states. However, according to Foucault (1990), power is actually dispersed throughout human society, which in turn also produces resistance. Relying on the Foucauldian notion of power, this dissertation attempts to uncover the inner processes of power in operation around *kijich'on*.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> For Foucault (1990), power is a multiple and mobile field of force relations where far-reaching, but never completely stable, effects of domination are produced. It is plural, fragmentary, differentiated, indeterminate, and historically and spatially specific. He rejects the idea that power is anchored in macrostructures or ruling classes and is repressive in nature. Power is dispersed, indeterminate, heteromorphous, subjectless, and productive, constituting individuals' bodies and identities. It operates through the hegemony of norms, political technologies, and the shaping of the body and soul. For details, see Foucault (1990, 81-92).

In sum, as influenced by both Enloe and Moon's account of camptown prostitution, this dissertation seeks to expand the existing theoretical as well as analytical scope, incorporating the notions of Gramsci's hegemony and Foucault's notion of power. I will probe the constitutive and transformative nature of *kijich'on* prostitution, navigating differing hegemonic powers and how they construct the symbol and reality of the *kijich'on*.

### 2.2. Nationalism and Gender

Here, I introduce the second body of literature on which I rely, the literature on gendered nationalism. This work serves to contextualize the complexity of Korea's nationalism and its relation to camptown prostitution as well as the women's movement. In particular, I assess what the role of the women's movement has been in challenging androcentric ideas and practices regarding camptown prostitution. I consider important gaps beyond the surface politics of the movement. I argue that movement activism may be affected by the hegemonic relationships between the U.S., the Korean government, androcentric NGOs, and other women organizations.

#### 2.2.1. Theorization of Gendered Nationalism

Based upon the recognition that gender relations have been absent or trivialized in the theorizations about nations and nationalism, some feminist scholars have intervened with the understanding that "nationalism is constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power" (McClintock 1996, 261). They have also paid attention to how the discourses of

nation and nationalism serve male interests and are used to justify and sustain male dominant society (Narayan 1998).<sup>32</sup> On the one hand, feminists have shown that women have always been central to the biological, cultural, and symbolic reproduction of the nation. On the other hand, they have scrutinized women's ambivalent positions in relation to nations and nationalism and the paradoxical deployment of national narratives (Jayawardena 1986; Spivak 1988; Enloe 1990; McClintock 1996; Walby 1996; Yuval-Davis 1997; Peterson 1998; Blom 2000; Wenk 2000).<sup>33</sup>

This work highlights how women symbolize the collective unity, honor, and virtue of specific national and ethnic projects, carrying the burden of representation of the national collective identity.<sup>34</sup> While women symbolically represent the nation's past and future as ideological boundary markers, emblems of the nation, and signifiers of national difference (Kandiyoti 1994; Wenk 2000; Blom 2000; Mani

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Yuval-Davis (2001) explains that because many feminist scholars have come from "hegemonic national and Western positionings," nationalism and nations, for a long time, have not been a major focus in the work of feminist scholars except for just a few feminists (121). If I sketch these feminists among others are as follows: Sylvia Walby (1992) (who has attended to the gendered character of nations and nationalisms), Kumari Jawayardena (1986) (who wrote on feminism and nationalism in the third world), Cynthia Enloe (1989, 1990, 1993, 2000) (who has questioned the relationship between militarism and patriarchy, militarism and gender/sexuality, and international relationship and gender/sexuality), Nira Yuval-Davis and Flova Anthias (1989) and Nira Yuval-Davis (1997, 2001) (who have long been concerned about the ways women affect and are affected by national and ethnic phenomena.) and Deniz Kandiyoti (1994) (who charts the diversity of positions accorded and taken up by women in post-colonial and national cultures while focusing on examples from South Asia and the Middle East.) and Ann McClintock (1996) observing a "Janus-faced" national project and nationalism. <sup>33</sup> Ann McClintock (1996) introduces a fourfold feminist theory of nationalism: first, investigating the gendered formation of sanctioned male theories; second, bringing into historical visibility women's active cultural and political participation in national formations; third, bringing nationalist institutions into critical relation with other social structures and institutions; forth, paying scrupulous attention to the structures of racial, ethnic and class power that continue to be evil privileged forms of feminism

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> McClintock (1996) also charts five major ways in which women have been implicated in nationalism (drawing on the Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias' idea): first, as biological reproducers of the members of national (ethnic) collectives; second as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic and national groups (through restrictions on sexual or marital relations); third, as active transmitters of the national culture and reproducers of the national collectivity [tradition and value]; forth, as symbolic signifiers of national difference [Self/Other]; fifth, as active participants in national struggles (261).

1990; Moghadam 1994),<sup>35</sup> they are also recruited by nationalist leaders to serve in militant anti-colonial movements and wars, as cheap laborers, warriors, and faithful wives and/or mothers. And yet, despite their multiple roles, women are nevertheless often excluded from the rights of enfranchised citizenship, retaining an "object" rather than a "subject" position in the nation. Feminist perspectives on nationalism also illuminate how the rhetoric of nationalism has served as a mirrored allegory of "the other" (Jager 2003; Yuval-Davis 2001, 128). This theoretical lens sheds light on how/why *kijich'on* women were recruited for the sake of "national interests" in differing ways as the political atmosphere changed.

## 2.2.2. Korea's Nationalism and Feminist Challenge

In South Korea, nationalism reflects multiple historical forms of resistance, including resistance to Japanese colonialism, the division between North and South, military authoritarian regimes, and the U.S. occupation. Nationalism, in this case, is based on a shared sense of Korean "ethnie," the *hanminjok*, <sup>36</sup> and the idea of "politics," in that political movements are significant in formulating nationalism in Korea (e.g. Breuilly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> A post-colonial nation has a particularly ambivalent relationships with its history, simultaneously accepting and negating, so has symbolic location of women in the nation. Women are therefore seen as an embodiment of the shameful national history which has to be negated or forgotten, or the past to which the nation should return, invoking nostalgia without history or memory of the pre-colonial. <sup>36</sup> Anthony Smith (2001) seeks to locate "modern nations within a continuum of historical forms of cultural community. The most relevant of these forms is that of ethnie, with which the modern nation shares a few elements—notably myths and historical memories, and a link with an historic territory" (23). For him ethnicity is "as complex a concept as nationhood." He emphasizes "the importance of myths of ancestry as well as shared memories and codes, then what we find...is that dominant or 'core' ethnies furnished much of the cultural basis for the formation of nations in general, and provided later nationalists with many cultural elements for forging modern nations" (23). And he emphasized the role of "shared memories." Shared memories, according to him (he follows Renan's argument), "constitute one of the defining elements of the national community. Recited, and later encoded, over generations, they form a series of historical tableaux which bind the members of ethnies into communities of history and destiny. Over time, they give rise to 'ethno-history'... "the retelling by the members of that ethnie to each other and to the next generation of the episodes that shaped the community" (23).

1996).<sup>37</sup> This nationalism has resisted the "official nationalism" developed under various military regimes. <sup>38</sup> Korea's nationalism, therefore, can be defined as ideology, politics, and sentiment—all of which give exclusive empowerment to those who share a sense of belonging to the same "ethnie" (hanminjok) through which "they identify with the nation and express their national royalty" (Mayer 2000, 2). As such it can be a site for struggles against external powers and for "the exercise of internal hegemony" at the same time (Mayer 2000, 2).

Existing literature on Korean nationalism has mainly focused on nationalism in relation to colonialism and imperialism, national liberation movements, modernization, and industrialization, with very little attention paid to the problematic of gender (e.g. Robinson 1986; Pak M. 1996; Kim T. 2000; Kim A. and Park 2003). That is, the discussion of nationalism for the nation (e.g. how it works for national unification or democratization) has been dominant inside and outside academia and has assumed that nationalism offers the most palpable form of resistance to colonialism and imperialism. This pervasive view rarely asks how nationalism simultaneously extends and reproduces the range and depth of colonialism. Given the history of Japanese colonial occupation, U.S. occupation, military authoritarian regimes, and national division, it is not too difficult to understand the pervasive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Breuilly (1996) stresses the political character of nationalism, arguing that "the formation of the specialized, sovereign, territorial, public state is the institutional context within which the idea of nationalism appears appropriate as ideology" (51). Therefore, his definition of nationalism is associated with politics: "1. There exists a nation—a special group which is set apart from all other human beings. 2. Political identity and loyalty are, first and foremost, with and to the nation. 3. The nation should have political autonomy, normally in the form of a sovereign state" (1996, 149). <sup>38</sup> The term "official nationalism" originates from Benedict Anderson (1991). Anderson argues that the official nationalism, willed merger of nation and dynastic empire, developed after, and in reaction to, the popular national movements proliferating in Europe since the 1820s, and the thing we have to remember is that it is not modeled on American and French histories (86-87). He explains the characters of the official nationalism as compulsory state-controlled primary education, state-organized propaganda, official rewriting of history, militarism, and endless affirmations of the identity of dynasty and nation (101).

tendency. It is problematic, however, that this resistant nationalism has operated as a single oppositional discourse against Japanese colonialism and the U.S. occupation and has suppressed alternative views.<sup>39</sup>

As many critical scholars outside Korea have pointed out, the development of Western imperialism and the history of Western modernity coincide with the rise of nationalism (Miyoshi 1996). <sup>40</sup> They have observed that in the context of the "Third World" and national liberation movements, nationalism not only operates as an oppositional discourse to colonialism and imperialism, but also reflects the mirrored allegory of "the other" in colonial discourse and practices of "otherization" (Bhabha 1994; Chatterjee 1996). <sup>41</sup>

In contrast to such approaches, some Korean feminists have scrutinized the paradoxical relation between nationalism and colonialism from a gendered lens (Choi C. 1998; Moon S. 1998) and problematized the ideology of gendered nationalism (Kim E. 1994; Yoon 1994). For example, Seungsook Moon (1998) analyzes the state's "official nationalism," during the period of rapid industrialization under the military regimes of South Korea (1961-1987) and examines its implications for gender hierarchy in society. Chungmoo Choi (1998) demonstrates how much nationalism and colonialism are interconnected with each other in terms of gender

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Opposed to the tendency, some Korean male scholars begin to raise questions about the negative effects of Korea's nationalism (i.e. Kwon 2000; 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Miyoshi (1996) observes how Western bourgeois leaders made "the myth of nation-state (that is, the belief in the shared community ruled by a representative government) and the myth of mission *civilisatrice* (that is, the voyagers' racial superiority over the heathen barbarians)" to effectively conceal their class interests and imperial desire (82).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> For example, Chatter (1996) examines the ironic practices of anti-colonial nationalists and the contradictory logic of nationalism. He argues that whereas the history of nationalism as a political movement tends to contest with the colonial power primarily around the inner domain, emphasizing culture differences with the West, nationalists, ironically demand that there be no rule of difference in the domain of the state in order to resist against differentiation in the domain of material.

relations and how colonized female subjects have been doubly oppressed by colonizers and the colonized. Of course, such feminist accountability does not mean that Korean nationalism has had no favorable effect on women.

In fact, women's movements in Korea have long been located within a "grand" discourse of the nation and have been affected by social pressure to make connections with larger movements for national and social liberation (Chai 1997, 170). Thus, an official attack on Korean nationalism has been "taboo" among feminists, as well. Historically, with national movements and in the process of nation building, women neither were accepted as political subjects, nor assigned to political and state institutions. Women's participation in the national liberation movement has also been trivialized. Yet, because nationalism has also symbolized the struggle of the oppressed against domination or the intervention of other nations, it can function as "a form of resistance" for women as well (Bunch 2002, 706). In effect, then, nationalism has been conducive to the development of women's movements in Korea, as many of them have emerged as a result of resistance against military regimes. At the same time, contradictions have been created by the promises of "one nation, national dignity" manifested by "resistant nationalism" (regarding women's movements in 1980s, see Kim 1996; Chai 1997; Kim 2000; Moon 2002).

Of course, as Kumari Jayawardena (1986) points out, loyalty to one's national liberation movement does not necessarily mean that women do not fight within it for the improvement and transformation of the position of women. Therefore, it is very difficult to conclude that nationalism has no favorable effect on women or vice versa. Rather, the relationship between nationalism and the women's movement is

contestable as well as interdependent. As Ania Loomba (1994) puts it, "woman is inconsistently and often paradoxically located in the national colonizer's [and nationalist] desire to locate the subaltern as the subject [and object] of history (316). However, Korea's feminists have paid little attention to the changing forms of nationalism(s) across time and space, or to the paradoxical relationship between nationalism and women's movements (for a rare exception, see Kim K. 1996).

I posit that the fact that women have lingered around the symbolic national boundary enables them to have a kin relationship with others and *other others*, specifically regarding differing subjects (and objects) of *kijich'on* in-between the boundaries of multiple nations. This research explores, from a very unstable positioning, a new possibility for women's movements at this historical moment (i.e. Sandoval, Bhabha, Ahmed, and Spivak). For I believe, like Bhabha (1994), that the interstitial passage between fixed identifications may open up a possibility of a "hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (4) and even a solidarity across varied borders, emergent from this very interstitial passage.

In conclusion, in this study I will highlight the complex relationships between women's movements and nationalism, as well as between *kijich'on* women and nationalist narratives, focusing on the ways in which women in the *kijich'on*, including prostitutes and women activists, respond to Korean nationalism. This discussion covers four time periods: the early twentieth century through the 1950s (which focuses on colonial states and nation building), the 1960s to the 1980s (which focuses on military regimes and militant social movements), the decade of the 1990s

(which focuses on the institutionalization of democracy and the emergence of a politics around women's issues and identities), and finally, the period after the 1990s, (which focuses on globalization and sensitivity to other others). It explores the multiple dimensions of nationalism and women's roles in nation-building, both of which are centered in the construction of *kijich'on* prostitution. As such, I will not simply focus on the oppressive/beneficial aspects of nationalism but also on fractures, disjunctures, and fissures between the nation and women, gaps through which women can navigate and explore possibilities for change over time.

#### 2.3. Theories of Globalization

## 2.3.1. Androcentric Conceptualization of Globalization

Globalization has been a major topic of study in academia, and literature on the topic has been expanding rapidly in many academic sites. There is no one agreed-upon definition of globalization, as there are such varied understandings of world history and the current global situation. Globalization has been variously conceived as "time-space compression" (Harvey 2000), the advent of the "network society" (Castells 2000), an "accelerating interdependence," a "shrinking world," and as "global integration." What distinguishes these definitions is "the differential emphasis given to material, spatio-temporal, and cognitive aspects of globalization" (Held and McGrew 2000, 3).

Some argue that globalization has emerged in tandem with the development of modern societies, as well as with Western industrialization and the accumulation of

material resources (Wallerstein 2000; Harvey 2000; Giddens 1990), allying it with "late capitalism" in its postmodern phase (Jameson 1991). Others regard globalization as unprecedented (Robertson 1992). Given advanced information technology, contemporary globalization has undoubtedly changed the relationship between time and space and rendered the world a more compressed place. However, opinions regarding the consequences of this compression are sharply divided. Some propose that as a progressive and liberating phenomenon, globalization opens up the potential for greater human connectedness and the spread of human rights, democracy, and political freedom (Beck 2000).

Conversely, some argue that globalization causes the eradication of cultural differences (Tomlinson 1991), which benefits Western capitalism and is detrimental to non-Western locals (Schiller, referenced in Beynon and Dunkerley 2000). In fact, globalization has an uneven impact, structured by gender, wealth disparities and inequalities between states. Yet, very few of the aforementioned approaches have really focused on the gendered aspects of globalization.<sup>42</sup> To understand the broader context in which foreign migrant workers substitute Korean prostitutes of the *kijich'on*, I rely on a feminist understanding of current global restructuring processes.

## 2.3.2. Gendered Globalization and Global (Re)Structuring

Many feminists have argued that globalization processes are highly gendered, particularly because women were already positioned differentially from men before the acceleration of these processes. Attentive to the fact that cultural asymmetries and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Appadurai (1996), for example, highlights "disjuncture" of global flows of people, goods, and ideas, but not gender-specific focused.

linkages continue to exist and are masked by economic and political interests at multiple levels (Kaplan 1994; Narayan and Harding 2000), some feminists have addressed how global capitalism writes its script on the bodies and lives of women from/in the "Third World" or the "South" (Mohanty 2003). Exploring such processes of "recolonization" of the raced, classed, national, and sexual bodies of women across borders under the neo-imperial or neocolonial aspects of globalization, these authors regard globalization as a continuum of the historical project of Western colonization.<sup>43</sup>

A number of feminists focus especially on how global restructuring works along the asymmetrical (gender and race) lines along which global capital power is distributed (Chow 2002; Hennessy 2000; Lowe and Lloyd 1997). Global restructuring refers to "the emergence of the global assembly line in which research and management are controlled by the core or developed countries, while assembly line work is relegated to semiperipheral or peripheral nations that occupy less privileged positions in the global economy, resulting in what has been termed the new international division of labor" (Ward 1990 quoted in Chow 2002, 14). The first phase of global restructuring can be traced to the late 1960s and early 1970s, when transnational corporations began to shift the labor-intensive parts of the production process to developing countries where cheap female labor was abundant (Steans 2000, 366-67), and continued to the 1980s, when scholars began to write about the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> For instance, Alison Jaggar (2001) defines globalization as "rapidly accelerating integration of many local and national economics into a single global market, regulated by the World Trade Organization, and to the political and cultural corollaries of this process" (298). She points out, for the last several decades, intercontinental trade and migrations of people have mostly connected the pursuit of new material resources and markets for the burgeoning capitalist economies of Western Europe and North America. That shaped the world and resulted in "a single interconnected system" of Eurocentric (including the U<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>) imperialism (299).

feminization of the workforce. Young, single women have been a major source of a flexible labor supply, and local firms have taken advantage of low-paid female workers. Because such women workers subsidized the waged labor of men throughout society, many countries were able to achieve "development" at a lower cost (Chow 2002, 16).

As such, gender as a significant boundary marker and identity producer as well as "a focal point both of and for global restructuring," involves a reworking of the boundaries between meanings of femininity and masculinity (Marchand and Runyan 2000, 18-9). Women's low wages are legitimated by gender ideology indicating that women's primary work is in the home, while men are the breadwinners. Such devaluation of women's paid work (Chow 2002, 16) further limits women's access to better opportunities. Moreover, because the global political economy operates with the logic of low cost and high productivity in the name of economic efficiency, women must remain the cheapest and at the same time most productive of all workers (Moghadam 1999; Steans 2000). Thus, it seems that women's subordinate and ghettoized position within assembly-line work will be maintained over time. As Hennessy (2000) points out, the bottom line for extracting surplus value under the regime of flexible accumulation is still rigidly gendered. More rigid patriarchal regimes underlie the more flexible gender systems of postmodern patriarchy. Women remain the most desirable source of cheap and malleable labor at this moment of globalization (157).

Thus, transnational capitalism's relentless desire for accumulation comes together with national attempts to achieve development and industrialization and the

patriarchal desire to sustain gender hierarchy within the domains of family, community, and nation. 44 Ongoing shifts in the international division of labor as well as migration also contribute to processes of globalization and global restructuring. Taking a feminist perspective on globalization, this dissertation situates transnational prostitutes in camptowns not merely within militarism or U.S. imperialism, but within this broader arena of global restructuring.

### 2.4. Postcolonial Feminist Theories and Trans/national Feminist Politics

The fourth body of literature relevant to this study is postcolonial feminist theory. This work is especially useful in illuminating the gaps in postcolonial Korean discourses on *kijich'on* prostitutes. Korean ethnonationalism, legitimated as an anticolonial and anti-imperial discourse, is also paradoxically ridden with colonialist assumptions, which position the *kijich'on* prostitutes as symbolic of the nation. As mentioned above, a feminist deconstruction of this problematic nationalist discourse may lead to the exploration of new possibilities of transnational coalition beyond the boundaries of the nation.

# 2.4.1. Postcolonial Feminist Theories on Otherization

The academic discussion of what counts as postcolonial theory is premised on the understanding of the term "postcolonial," which, in its various usages, carries a multiplicity of meaning. Arif Dirlik (1997) indicates that currently the term

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> In effect, both the nation-state and multi- or transnational corporations get benefits from it. Kim S. (1997) observed that many Korean women were heavily concentrated in Masan Free Export Zone in the mid-1980s, where young female workers were required to play their roles as industrial soldiers and dutiful daughters. She claims that not only did women experience patriarchy and capitalism as structures as well as ideologies, but also they struggled against both of them simultaneously.

"postcolonial" is used as, first, "a literal description of conditions in formerly colonial societies" in the Third World; second, "postcolonial" is used as "a description of a global condition after the period of colonialism," being intended as a substitute for the earlier term "Third World"; and third, the term pertains to "a discourse on the above conditions that is informed by the epistemological and psychic orientations that are products of those conditions" (503).

Given that the term postcolonial is defined in varied ways in many academic fields, it is no surprise that confusion and criticism center on its uses and definitions. Some regard postcolonial theory as work by non-white scholars (such as Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, and Paul Gilroy) from former colonial territories who have relocated in the West. Ong (1999), however, finds this use of the term problematic, for it assumes that all postcolonial theorists share the experiences of dislocation and displacement in the West (32-33). For others, postcolonial theory is literature or literary criticism produced by intellectuals of Third World origin (mostly from India, Caribbean regions, and Africa), mainly focusing on the experience and identity of the colonized. 45 Problems result from a "culturalism" embedded in much postcolonial literature which does not attend to the capitalist (re)structuring of the world that constitutes "foundational categories" (Dirlik 1997, 514-17). 46 Moreover, used with an uncritical emphasis on the "post," postcolonialism thus becomes something which is "post" or "after" the colonial (Mishra and Hodge 1994, 276). This account necessarily leads to the idea that postcolonial theory has nothing to do with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Ilan Kapoor (2002) comments that it is widely accepted in the U.S. academy that "postcolonial theory emerges out of literary studies…its arguments based primarily on literary sources" (650). <sup>46</sup> Dirlik criticizes that "postcolonial critics have been largely silent on the relationship of the idea of postcolonialism to its contexts in contemporary capitalism" (502).

today's scholar who has no experience of the colonizer or colonized, but is just about the colonized or recently decolonized.

From my perspective, however, postcolonial criticism is not a mere result of "metaphysical idealism" (Juan 1998, 9), but instead, is "a resistance to colonialism and imperialism" (Young 2001, 15). Even though cultural and political critiques of Western imperialism were important for exploring past experiences of colonial rule, such critiques are still relevant and still attuned to the present impact of Western economic, political, and cultural power (Carter 2001, 207). 47 Thus, postcolonial feminists continue to attend to the legacies of colonialism (or imperialism) and the construction of Western-centric knowledge, focusing on women who have long been "otherized." Within this perspective, issues of race, gender, colony, empire, nationhood (nationalism), and the global political economic system are central. For postcolonial feminists, therefore, the "post" in postcolonial signifies both changes in power structures after the official end of colonialism as well as colonialism's continuing effects (Mongia 1996, 1-2). This account allows us to understand that colonialism has not disappeared under late capitalism, but has merely taken new forms (Hennessy 2000, 159), in this current era of globalization.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Young (2001) indicates that anti-colonial movements were revolutionary mixtures of the indigenous and the cosmopolitan, diasporic formations of intellectual and cultural resistance that produced new kinds of knowledge that flourished alongside anti-colonial political practice. In this respect, postcolonial theory marks the intrusion of these radically different perspectives into the Western academy. Young argues that while postcolonial critique challenges established, Eurocentric knowledge in the cultural sphere, it continues to work in the spirit of the anticolonial movements by further developing its radical political edge to enforce social justice on a global basis. Postcolonial theory, therefore, involves "a political analysis of the cultural history of colonialism, and investigates its contemporary effects in Western and tricontinental cultures, making connections between that past and the politics of the present" (6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Some people may argue that "imperialism can function without formal colonies but colonialism cannot" (Loomba 1998, 7). However, taken the current new global order, it is clear that domination does not depend on direct rule of control, and colonization can be deployed without colonies. We have witnessed varied economic, cultural, and political penetration of some nations by others. And neo-

Such an understanding of the postcolonial calls for a reflection on *coloniality* embedded in the continuity of international imbalances in imperial power (McClintock 1995, 13) and on *decolonization* at the same time. <sup>49</sup> For me, coloniality is not just about the psychological aspects of colonial subjects, but also about the "actualities" of colonial history inscribed in our (sub)consciousness, bodies, and practices that eventually led to social injustice, inequality, violence.

As Mohanty (1991a) puts it, "colonization has been used to characterize everything from the most evident economic and political hierarchies to the production of a particular cultural discourse about what is called the 'third world'" (52). It also implies "a relation of structural domination and suppression—often violent—of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question" (ibid.). Colonization, then, pertains to "how dominant systems of representation produce and reinforce mental structures and images to constrain, dehumanize, and disempower particular individuals and social groups in both First- and Third-World cultures" (Heung 1995, 83). In this sense, it can be argued that colonization takes account of ideas, attitudes, behaviors, and intellectual practices that consciously and subconsciously reproduce dominant ideologies of gender, race, and nation and political hierarchies between/among nations and peoples.

imperialism, without colonial territories, has expanded its power through colonization of our consciousness and subconsciousness, production and reproduction of colonial imaginaries of subjects, and cultural norms of relationship. Even worse, direct military invasions of one nation over others are still prevalent around the world, requiring real colonies and producing new world conflicts. For current postcolonial theorists, therefore, colonialism implies forms of (direct/indirect) material and territorial domination within the trajectory of Western imperialism and political, cultural, and ideological practices of imperialists. Both actuality (materiality) and symbolism are embedded in multi-levels of culture, economy, and politics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Emma Perez' (1999) notion of "decolonial imagery" could be valuable in understanding one aspect of decolonized condition. She argues that "to remain within the colonial imaginary is to remain the colonial object who cannot be the subject until decolonized. The decolonial imaginary challenges power relations to decolonize notions of 'otherness' to move into a liberatory terrain" (110).

The account requires examining the *colonial psychic terrain* deeply embedded both in our consciousness and subconsciousness. What I term the *colonial psychic terrain* refers to the *colonized (sub)consciousness* including its attendant practice, which can apply not only to the colonized but also to the colonizer. According to Chungmoo Choi (1997), the colonization of consciousness refers to "the imposition by the dominant power of its own worldview, its own cultural norms and values, on (colonized) people so that they are compelled to adopt this alien system of thought as their own and therefore disregard or disparage indigenous culture and identity" (462). Accordingly, if we are caught by particular ideologies, we are colonized by the ideologies in some sense. Deconstructing the colonization of consciousness requires the process of self-critique regarding othering practices, as well as of self-reflection on ambivalent consciousness, thoughts, and on perspectives embedded within ourselves. That is, it is important to excavate "our" *colonized psychic terrain* for decolonization from within. 50

Particularly in Korea, practices of othering others (e.g. women, foreigners, people who have different political ideologies) have been (in)visible within political and civil society. Women and people who have different ethnies have long been otherized within the public sphere, civil society, and the family. For example, the presence of migrant workers in Korea since the mid-1990s has raised questions about what constitutes the nation and nationhood (Moon K. 2000). I argue that the

This process involves rethinking the taken-for-grantedness, reconsidering classification work, and understanding its attendant moral dimensions. Bowker and Star (2000) argue that this process enables feminist methodology for "infrastructural inversion." Following them, "infrastructural inversion" means new ways of seeing and thinking entailing "a struggle against the tendency of infrastructure to disappear, recognizing the depths of interdependence of technical networks and standards as well as the real work of politics and knowledge production" (34).

mechanism of "othering" does not result only from Western colonialism or imperialism but is also embedded in nationalism and gender relations. That is, the ways in which nation states and nationalists otherize *others* and how colonized consciousness operates within these to construct "new strangers" should be under scrutiny.<sup>51</sup>

With this concern, I will centrally explore how/why *kijich'on* prostitutes have been otherized, and how the *kijich'on* movement has responded to the othering practices of Korean nationals, other movements, and the nation-state. How Korean nationals have encountered new strangers (e.g., foreign prostitutes) is examined as well. This may be seen as a process of the reexamination of Korea's colonized psychic terrain, as a process of excavating the coloniality and colonialism inscribed in Koreans' ideas, perspectives, communities, theories, and practices.

## 2.4.2. For Trans/National Feminist Politics

My last concern involves the significance of the *kijich'on* movement to transnational women's movements, particularly assessing whether or not its movement activism has engaged in enacting "revolutionary, mobile, and global coalitions of citizenactivists" (Sandoval 2000, 184).

Postcolonial feminism, from my perspective, engages in transnational feminist politics. This is not just because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories and experiences of cultural and geopolitical dis/re/placement,

multiculturalism involve the reproduction of the figure of the *stranger*, and the enforcement of boundaries (13). She calls for attention to "how and where colonization persists after so-called decolonization...to the shifting conditions in which encounters between others, and between *other* 

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others, take place" (13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Sara Ahmed (2000) examines the ways in which the contemporary discourses of globalization and multiculturalism involve the reproduction of the figure of the *stranger* and the enforcement of

dis/re/location (Bhabha 1994; Lal 1999), but also because postcolonialism engages in political ideals of transnational social justice. Given that women's everyday lives and local gendered contexts and ideologies are linked to larger, transnational political and economic structures, it is necessary to seek the links among patriarchies, colonialisms, racisms, and feminisms" (Kaplan and Grewal 2002, 73). Therefore, transnational feminist practices are attentive to the micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle, as well as to the macropolitics of global economic and political systems and processes (Mohanty 2003, 223). They involve, following Kaplan and Grewal (2002), "forms of alliance, subversion, and complicity within which asymmetries and inequalities can be critiqued" (73).

For my project, I prefer the term *trans/national*. Drawing on Marjorie Pryse's work (2000), the prefix "trans" originally means "across or over," "beyond or above," "from one place to another," "to cross over or pass through and overcome" (105). It signifies actively moving through and among all sorts of differences, including people, things, places, or ideologies. The slash (/) indicates both connection and disconnection. It means that as contingency, conflict, tensions, and disjunctures are emergent in crossing borders and transnational movement, so are integration, conjunction, and coalition. The "*trans/national*" is, therefore, engaged in women's simultaneously shifting and rooted positionalities, and signifies *disjunctions* as well as *conjunctions* between logics and practices of nationalism, colonialism, and globalization. This term calls our attention to the complex conditions under which women move across racial, national, temporal, and ideological boundaries and to how they become resituated, in which *kijich'on* women have been situated. It is also useful

to highlight continued conflicts, consensuses, and contradictions between the U.S. and Korean government interests. The problematic of *kijich'on* prostitution is transnational in that it is an outcome of different nation's relationships; it is trans/national in that some ideas, ideologies, materials, and subjects pertaining to the *kijich'on* cannot cut across national boundaries. In addition, the prefix *trans-* in regard to *kijich'on* prostitutes suggests *transgressive* implications regarding the androcentrism of Korean society and Korean nationalism. *Trans-* also suggests the possibilities for *transformation* over time and across national boundaries, particularly regarding the conditions and identities of women.

For feminist practice, the aspiration of *trans/national* demands the *transminded* to go beyond the disciplined stereotypical imaginary caught within national and ethnic boundaries or existing ideologies. The *trans/national* also emphasizes the necessity of cross-national feminist coalition in order to effectively respond to the real and concrete effects of globalization, nationalism and colonialism. I argue that such a trans/national feminist politics could foster "a multicultural" (Gunning 1992, 193) or transnational dialogue. It necessitates a technology of what Latour (2003) calls "diplomacy," (or what I call consistent and patient *negotiation*)—a sincere engagement with shifting "enemies" and "myself," based on the sophisticatedly developed epistemological, political, and strategic languages in order to account for the relational web of contradictory positionalities (Shohat 1998, 38). On the one hand, "Love," what Sandoval (2002) terms an apparatus of emancipation from "institutionalized hatred, domination, subordination"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> For example, Gayatri Spivak (1993) argues that it is imperative to "negotiate between the national, the global, and the historical, as well as the contemporary diasporic" if we are to comprehend the critical possibilities of feminist alliances across discrepant and district material conditions (278).

(25), should be a strong principle for the diplomacy to enact transnational feminist movements. On the other hand, diplomacy must be premised on the recognition of "undoing ways in which we colonize and objectify our different histories and cultures" (Mohanty 1998, 486). Regarding this research, I am very cautious about the mode of flattering or the mode of representation based upon the desire to know Others to reify Self, as well as the mode of ignorance which might converge into the mode of colonialism. Under the theoretical scope, I assess how the *kijich'on* movement has responded to the differing hegemonic power relations between/among nation states and NGOs.

#### Conclusion

This dissertation project seeks to challenge the existing analytic frame of camptown prostitution, introducing a simultaneous focus on militarism, imperialism, and gender ideology. A number of feminists studying camptown prostitution have demonstrated the close relationship between militarism and gender ideology, as well as women's sexual servicing and foreign military bases, observing the considerable impact of militarization on women (Block and Thistlethwaite1996; Enloe 1990, 2000; Kirk & Okazawa-Rey 2000; Moon K. 1997; 1998; Moon S. 1998; Okazawa-Rey 1997; Sturdevant 2000; Sturdevant & Stoltzfus 1992; Yuh 2002). In a similar manner, some Korean feminist activists of Durebang, Saeumto, and the Korea Women's Associations United (KWAU) have successfully documented military prostitutes' experiences.

The theoretical approaches may explain some partial dimension(s) of *kijich'on* prostitution in South Korea. Yet such feminist work also situates *kijich'on* prostitution within the intersections of interstate relations, nation building, democratization, and gendered nationalism. Moreover, I argue that for a more comprehensive explanation on change regarding *kijich'on* prostitution in the era of globalization, feminists must theorize the current global situation as well as crossnational women's movements (Grewal 1998; Grewal & Kaplan 1994; Gill 1996; Hennessy 2000; Hoogvelt 2001; Jaggar 2000; 2001; Jameson 1988; Kaplan 1994; Lal 1999; Lowe & Lloyd 1997; Moon K. 2000; Pettman 1999; Sassen 1998; Shohat 1997; 1998; Steans 2000).

In this research project, though I weave seemingly discrete bodies of theories together, postcolonial theories in particular anchor my positionality as a feminist researcher focusing on U.S. camptown prostitution in postcolonial Korea (Ahmed 2000; Bhabha 1994; Basu 1995; 2000; Desai 2002; Dirlik 1997; Fanon 1967; Grewal 1998; Grewal & Kaplan 1994; Hall 1994; 1995; Hennessy 2000; Lowe & Lloyd 1997; Mohanty 1991; 1998; 2003; Narayan 2000; Said 1979; Schutte 1999; Spivak 1988; 1999; Stoler 1997; Trinh T. 1989; and Young 2001). Because colonial legacies are embedded in contemporary Korean culture and society, Korea's nationalism should not be assumed to be a counter-discourse of colonialism and/or imperialism, but rather, should be the subject of critical postcolonial feminist scrutiny. I believe that this kind of feminist analysis can provide a radical critique of military prostitution, gendered nationalism, and global migration.

Chapter 3: Emergence of Military Prostitution: Colonial Legacies and the U.S. Military Occupation in South Korea (before the 1950s)

## Introduction

This chapter explores the emergence of U.S. military prostitution in South Korea, tracing its historical roots and deployment back to the late nineteenth century and the establishment of a particular system of prostitution in Japan. Although it was not until the mid-1950s that U.S. camptown prostitution was systematically established, the U.S. Army Military Government in South Korea, from the beginning in September 1945 when the 24<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, consisting of some 70,000 soldiers, arrived to transfer power from the crumbled Japanese colonial empire, laid the essential foundation of kijich'on prostitution in the neo-colonized territory, based upon Japan's licensed prostitution. During the U.S. Army Military Government rule (1945-1948), licensed prostitution, which had been introduced by the Japan's colonial government in Korea (1910-1945), was officially outlawed under the name of liberal democracy. However, in reality, prostitution was neither abolished nor suppressed. Rather, it was condoned as an inevitable means of entertaining male soldiers, and prostitutes were regulated to control the spread of venereal disease (VD). Therefore, this chapter examines the ways in which the U.S. constructed military prostitution utilizing the Japanese colonial apparatus.

# 3.1. Historical Roots: Japanese Colonization and Construction of Prostitution

A history of military prostitution must begin with Korea's subordination to Japan. To be sure, imperial Japan was not the first foreign nation to take advantage of its superior position to exploit Korean women's sexual labor. When the Koryŏ Dynasty (918-1392) on the Korean peninsula came under Mongol domination, the Korean state was forced to round up young women and send them as kongnyŏ (literally "tribute women") to Mongols of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), and the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910) continued to recruit and offer Korean women to China's Ming Dynasty (1368-1662) (Soh C. 2004, 170-171). However, it was only imperial Japan, through its state-regulated system of licensed prostitution, which systematically, strategically, and collectively abused other women's sexuality as sexual objects of their soldiers. Social perception toward as well as the practice of prostitution was dramatically reconstituted by Japanese colonial policies as well. In this regard, this section discusses how, in the Korean context, the instrumentalization of women's sexuality for the use of the military originates from the colonial practices and policies of the Japanese Empire.

#### 3.1.1. Trans/Im/planting Licensed Prostitution

Licensed prostitution in Korea, following Son's definition (1997), refers to "a system of prostitution in which brothels are located in pleasure quarters regulated by the Japanese colonial government" (171).<sup>53</sup> The history of this system goes back to the turn of the twentieth century, when Japan started invading the Korean peninsula, bringing Japanese prostitutes with their army in order to cater to Japanese traders and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Regarding the detailed discussion about the licensed prostitution system in modern Japan, please refer to Fujime Yuki (1997).

non-resident Japanese. In 1876 when three ports in Korea were opened according to the provisions of the Treaty of Kanghwa (Fujime 1997, 148).<sup>54</sup> Japan introduced a "modern, commercialized" form of prostitution into Pusan and Wonsan (Son 1997, 172). The term "modern" here was used to distinguish this form of prostitution from an even earlier "pre-modern" form when entertainers or kisaeng were registered. "Commercialized" was used to refer to the development of the system of sex for sale based upon transacted sexual services. To be sure, kisaeng as a group of people had ranked low on the social strata of Korean society, particularly in the period when women's virginity and chastity were highly valued, and occasionally bartered sex for money or goods. Nonetheless, a professional kisaeng was primarily trained in music, arts, and literature in order to entertain the yangban class and did receive a certain kind of respect from the public and *vangban* as well.<sup>55</sup> These entertainers were not perceived as mere sexual objects easily purchased in return for money (which is the contemporary perception of prostitutes), but rather as a symbol of sexuality for pleasure. <sup>56</sup> As Javawardena (1986) argues, although the *kisaeng* very often became victims of sexual oppression, they existed outside the boundaries for women fixed by the Confucian system. Some of them became strong forces in the polity acting from "behind the screen" (214-15). However, as Japan's licensed prostitution system was transplanted to Korea, the kisaeng's symbolic meaning and actual roles in society

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> This is the first treaty between Korea and Japan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Although historians still debate the precise definition of the *yangban*, it clearly was an elite and ruling group of people who could be landowners, officials, and scholars (Cumings 1997, 51-52).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> The tradition of *kisaeng* began in the Koryŏ Dynasty (918-1392). They were professional entertainers trained in a special institute, the Kyobang, where they learned how to sing, dance, play instruments, and engage in lively and witty conversation (Jayawardena 1986, 214).

were dramatically changed and the brothel became the dominant organizational feature of prostitution.

In 1881, Japan officially approved licensed prostitution with the enactment of the Regulations Concerning Houses of Assignation and the Prostitution Business (Yoshiaki 2000, 203), with which it tried to control prostitution and the management of inns, restaurants, bars, and other houses of entertainment (Son 1997, 172). In the beginning, Japanese women were brought to Korea to serve as prostitutes for Japanese soldiers. But as prostitution even at restaurants and eateries became a familiar scene with the growing number of Japanese residents settling in more areas across the country, the number of Korean prostitutes was growing rapidly. As such, the Japanese government began to regulate and congregate prostitutes to assure Japanese men that the prostitutes were free of VD.

In 1904, the Japanese embassy enacted the law, Kyungsung Consulate Order No.3, which officially sanctioned the existence of prostitutes, identifying them as "workers who make money in return for selling sex to anybody who is willing to pay for [it]." Legitimately authorized "pleasure quarter districts" began to be established in every region where the Japanese came to be concentrated (Yamashida 1997, 149). In time, commercialized prostitution spread throughout the country well beyond the pleasure quarter districts. The first five years after Japan's 1910 annexation of Korea marks the full introduction of the licensed prostitution system. Before annexation, laws regulating prostitution were issued by the councils of the towns where the Japanese resided. After annexation, the provincial Police

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 $<sup>^{57}</sup>$  According to Yamashida, Japanese residents in Korea reached over  $80,\!000$  after the Russo-Japanese War (ibid.).

Administration Bureaus took over the responsibility for regulating prostitution (Son 1997, 173; Yamashida 1997, 160). Accordingly, the marshal of police in each province could designate as well as control the restricted areas where prostitutes had to live and work (Yu 1999, 293).

In March 1916, the colonial government passed the Laws Regulating Houses of Assignation and Prostitutes (Government General Police Administration Division Ordinance No. 4) (Yoshiaki 2000, 203), along with the Inn Control Regulations, the Restaurant and Bar Control Regulations, and the Geisha (*yegi*), Shakufu (*chakbu*), and Geisha House Control Regulations (Son 1997, 175). Through the Regulations, the Japanese government consolidated the licensed prostitution system on a national scale, granting licenses to operate the related business with detailed regulations to control prostitutes (Yamashida 1997, 162).

In transplanting its own prostitution system on to Korean soil, imperial Japan eliminated the registered *kisaeng* system in 1908, and reconstituted it within the structure of the *kisaeng* union, which incorporated the Japan's *yegi* system (Japanese entertainer system). The term *kisaeng* was officially switched into the Japanese term, *kwonbeon* in 1915 (Soh J. 2004, 134). In addition, under the new regulations, *kisaeng* became elaborately categorized into different groups of prostitutes: *yegi* (*kisaeng* mainly engaged in arts, e.g. *geisha* in Japanese), *changgi* (*kisaeng* who are paid for providing sexual services to many unspecified persons), and *shakufu* (barmaids who often perform sexual services, called *chakbu* in Korean) (Pak J. 1994, 66-7; Yamashida 1997, 163). <sup>58</sup> Consequently, *kisaeng*, who had continuously traversed the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> From then, distinction between/among Korean, Japanese, and other foreign prostitutes became clearly made (ibid.).

boundaries of culture, modernity, and sexuality, became officially acknowledged as licensed prostitutes who earned money in return for selling sex (Son 1997, 172).<sup>59</sup> Although licensed prostitution took different forms and names in different time periods as well as geographical regions in Korean history, it operated as a system not only to confine women's bodies in designated districts but also to control virtually every aspect of their lives (ibid.).

## 3.1.2. Legacies of Japan's Prostitution System

The prominent characteristic in licensed prostitution is a combination of compulsory venereal disease examinations and a registration system for prostitutes (Fujime 1997, 135). Prostitutes were required to live in fixed separate districts, so-called "pleasure quarter districts" (red-light districts), where their lives were entirely subject to state administration and venereal disease examinations. Japan carried out its first mandatory medical examinations for venereal disease in Nagasaki's red-light district at the request of the Russian Navy in the late nineteenth century. After that time, compulsory examinations followed in the open ports in Japan and other Asian colonies under "civilization" and "enlightenment" policies (Fujime 1997, 138-39). For the Korean peninsula, regulations conforming to Japan's domestic licensed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Many *kisaengs* were pioneers in that they pursued human emancipation through class and labor liberation, as well as sexual liberation, constructing modern dimension of sexuality outside the patriarchal marriage system and engaging in free love (Soh 2004, 132). According to Kim, J. (1999), during the transition to the modern era in the late 1900s, *kisaeng* played a central role as active cultural agents in constituting modernity. Because *kisaeng*'s aversion to modern occupations was less than that of other women, they relatively easily committed to work in café and bars, which did not exist before the advent of a service industry due to urbanization. As such, they were the first group of people to become familiarized with modern culture, along with intellectuals and bourgeoisie in salons and cafés. During the 1920s and 1930s, they were, intentionally or unintentionally, to break the oppressive nexus of the patriarchal system through their new living style and fashion of which "normal" Korean women had never dreamed. For example, Hwa Jung-sŭn clarified in "Kisaeng Life Can Be Fresh" that she voluntarily chose *kisaeng* as profession (Chosun Ilbo, 25 March 2005).

prostitution system were stipulated in the Japanese settlements followed by the Treaty of Kanghwa (1876) (ibid., 148). After the annexation of Korea, the Japanese colonial government ordered prostitutes in Seoul to have the VD exams twice a week and dispatched public medical doctors to 186 regional facilities. As a result, 27,539 Korean women were forced to have these examinations in 1911 and 50,904 in 1915 (Yamashida 1997, 162).<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, Korean prostitutes in congregated brothels were under the even more restricted regulation order and harsh conditions than Japanese prostitutes. Even though both Korea and Japan had a licensed prostitution system in common (e.g. the enforcement of mandatory VD checks and restricted places upon where prostitutes could live), there were differences between regulations protecting prostitutes. In Korea, the minimum age of prostitutes was seventeen, while in Japan it was illegal to employ women under age eighteen. While in Japan, prostitutes' freedoms of communication, of association, of access to reading material, of ownership of personal property, and of consumption were mandated, Korean prostitutes were permitted only to enter into contracts and to communicate and meet with clients. Their situation was as if there were no such legal freedom (Yoshiaki 2000, 204). Worse, the pleasure districts developed by Japan, such as wanwŏl-dong in Pusan and sŏnhwa-dong in so-called yellow house Inch'ŏn, extended into the largest prostitution

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> In the process, the VD examination system became a source of fear and shame for prostitutes. To expose the lower half of their bodies in the presence of many people was an intolerable shame for Korean women who were strongly influenced by Confucianism. To avoid the shame, many women stopped working temporarily; some became *kisaeng* (who were able to operate outside the examination system before 1916), some fled to the countryside, and others tried to overdose on opium (Fujime 1997, 148).

areas throughout the country, which continue, even in 2006, to exist as notorious redlight districts (Pyun 1997, 157).

In response to the changing conditions, kisaeng (prostitutes) tried to form selfgoverned unions to protect themselves from increasing exploitation. Some kisaeng unions in Kesŏng and Suwŏn called for strikes against mandatory VD exams, demanding "abolition of the VD examinations conducted once a week, since it is too insulting to be tolerated" (Dong-a Ilbo, 26 Feb, 1925; 22 March, 1925). 61 Particularly, some women, encouraged with the rise of various movements in the 1920s, were actively involved in social movements. For example, kisaeng Pak Yon-hwa, who was influenced by socialism, threw herself into the socialist movement, declaring, "we are human beings. And as people, we deserve to live like people." And Chong Ch'ilsong, a former kisaeng, became the head of the socialist women's organization Kun'uhoe (Friends of the Rose of Sharon) (Son 1997, 195).<sup>62</sup> Prostitutes' collective actions to improve their working conditions continued in the 1930s. According to Yu (1999), in the 1930s, the colonial government had only to amend the harsh regulations to respond to prostitutes' frequent strikes to improve the working conditions. Due to the actions, the permission for a free one-day leave system was put into effect in 1935 (298). 63 The magazine *Chang-an* inaugurated in January 1927 is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Likewise, the Dong-rae *kwonbeon* called for a strike in 1929 to refuse VD examinations with a rationale that "we do not have to have VD checks because we are not prostitutes" (<u>Dong-a Ilbo</u> 2 May, 1929).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> A women's organization under Japanese colonial rule, *Kun'uhoe*, was formed by a coalition of Christian and socialist women in 1927. It declared its position against prostitution. Since *Kun'uhoe* viewed the oppression of Korean women as "caused by both Confucian patriarchy and the contradictions of modern capitalism" (Yi 1989, 86) and advocated rights for women, *Kun'uhoe* was sensitive to gender inequality and class injustice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> In addition, the submission of a petition of 1937, titled "Allow Dance Hall in Korea," to demand that the Japanese colonial government allow a dance hall in Seoul city, was under the leadership of *kisaengs* and café madams (*Ssam Ch'ŏnri* 1937; quoted in Kim J. 1999, 215-21).

further evidence of *kisaeng*'s active participation in society and their relatively strong ability to express collective positions on a variety of issues. The magazine was edited and written by *kisaeng*, composed of articles to explore individual herstories and daily lives, to call for awareness of human rights, and/or to critique sexism and classism in Korean society (Soh 2004; <u>Chosun Ilbo</u>, 25 March 2005). However, the *kisaeng*'s spirit of resistance, which at first nurtured by their lowly status in society were already fading away in the 1930s as licensed prostitution became firmly entrenched in Korea and went hand in hand with the establishment of Japanese military barracks.<sup>64</sup>

From the onset of Japan's imperial endeavors, the Japanese government had developed red-light districts solely for military use both in Japan and in its colonies. But it was not until 1937 that the Japanese government and Army began to construct full-scale military comfort stations (Son 1997, 147-48; Chung 1997, 222-23). Some military brothels were built after their civilian managers applied for permission to do so; others were preexisting public brothels re-designated for military use (Chung C. 1997, 226). The idea of comfort stations for the exclusive use of the Japanese

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Neither the *kisaeng*'s resistance nor the Korean anti-prostitution movement were ever able to become part of the broader nationalist struggle of the colonial period. Son (1997) offers the following reasons: "[N]ationalists seemed to have determined that prostitution was a product of the social system and would not disappear until society underwent fundamental changes. In other words, they undoubtedly had determined that its abolition was inseparably bound up with national independence from Japan" (198).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> As the war between Japan and China had lasted longer than anticipated, the Japanese government began to order the wartime system in Japan (including its colonies) to mobilize "human resources" (Chung 1997, 223). Particularly, in the face of frequency of wartime rapes which were hindering the military governance and causing the outbreak of full-scale hostilities in colonies, the Japanese military considered the establishment of military comfort stations essential to maintaining military discipline as well as efficiency and to motivating soldiers to follow orders unconditionally (Yoshiaki 2000, 189-91). In December 1937, a chief commander of Japanese troops dispatched to central China was directed to build military brothels in Nanjing, and a chief of the Tenth Troop ordered military police to build brothels in Huzhou. The Department of Military Affairs, a subgroup of the Ministry of the Army, sent orders in 1938 to the commanders of troops in north and central China to select people who would

military in war zones and occupied territories was easily accepted in such a militant androcentric atmosphere thoroughly pervaded by the licensed prostitution system (Yoshiaki 2000, 205). Based upon the state-regulated system of prostitution and the widespread network of the traffic in women in Korea under colonial rule, in fact, Japan could mobilize so quickly many Korean women as so-called "comfort women" (Pak 1994, 64-66; Yoshiaki 2000, 205; Son 1997, 202). <sup>66</sup> Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that many Korean women, who had worked in cafés or in Japanese-style bars, were solicited to serve Japanese soldiers, even though the majority of comfort women were recruited from the rural lower class. It was not a mere accident that the term "comfort woman" was pervasively used throughout Korea in the 1930s along with terms such as "barmaid" (*shakufu*), "women in the drinking business" (*shūgyōfu*), "courtesan" (*gijo*), and other "professional women" (*tokushu fujo*) (ibid., 221).

The symbolic parallel between the violation of a comfort woman's body and domination over enemy others on the battlefield or through colonial institutions is obvious (Tanaka 2002, 4). In effect, the ideology of masculinity is intrinsically interrelated with racism and nationalism. The conquest of another race and colonization of its people often rhetorically produce the simultaneous demasculinization and feminization of the colonized. Sexual abuse of the bodies of

mobilize women for military brothels. When the Japanese Army in Manchuria planned special training sessions to prepare for war against Russia, the army requested twenty thousand women for army brothels from the Korean colonial government, and eight thousand women were actually mobilized for that purpose (Chung 1997, 224).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> During World War II, over 200,000 young Korean women were drafted as "comfort women" to service Japanese soldiers. These women were stationed at comfort stations throughout Asia and the South Pacific. According to Margaret Stetz and Bonnie B.C. Oh (2001), the women were subject to daily "sexual abuse," "repeated rapes," "severe physical violence," and "hard labor." During the last month of the war, these women were mostly murdered or left to die by retreating Japanese troops.

women belonging to the conquered national symbolizes the dominance of the conquerors (ibid., 5). Therefore, it is necessary for the colonial state to symbolically identify its men (soldiers) as colonizer and women as objects to be conquered in order to legitimize its colonial occupation, domination, and exploitation over the effeminized nation, the colonized inferior.

To Koreans, in this sense, the comfort woman was a symbol of the helpless impotence of Korean men who could not protect their own women, families, and nation. Korean virgins, who were collectively raped by the colonizer enemy, Japan, symbolized the raped nation. Such historical memory, which is deeply embedded in Korea's national consciousness, still remains a national trauma that has long overshadowed Koreans' perception of military prostitutes, as discussed further.

In conclusion, this chapter explores the policies and practices of licensed prostitution during Japan's colonial occupation of Korea. This system is at the foundation of the major features of contemporary *kijich'on*: the commercialized redlight district with congregated brothels accompanied by a government-regulated system of compulsory venereal disease examination. The instrumentalization of women's sexuality, particularly for the use of the military, also originates from the period of Japanese colonial rule. As licensed prostitution was widely deployed in conjunction with enforced Korean women's sexual labor for Japanese soldiers, the notion of prostitution as sexuality for pleasure was dramatically changed into sex for sale and/or enforced sexual slavery, which became a foundational idea of *kijich'on* prostitution for the decades to come.

# 3.2. Korea under the U.S. Army Military Government

Korea regained its independence in August 1945 following the defeat of Japan at the end of World War II. However, General Order Number One for the Japanese surrender on August 15, which was issued by General Douglas MacArther, included the thirty-eight parallel decision indicating that the U.S. should occupy the South and the USSR the North of the Korean peninsula. The unilateral and hasty decision was originally made by two young colonels of the U.S. military and the Soviet Red Army based upon a thirty-minute meeting around midnight on August 10-11, without consulting any Koreans. Subsequently, within a few months of its liberation, Korea was effectively divided into two nations (Cumings 1997, 185-87). On September 8, 1945, the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps convoy of twenty-one ships weighed anchor in Inch'ŏn harbor. The total number of American troops and civil service teams approached 25,000 within the few weeks and reached 70,000 by November 1945.<sup>67</sup> This section discusses the nature of the U.S. military government in South Korea and examines the roles of the Women's Bureau established by the military government in the name of "democratic nation building."

# 3.2.1. U.S. Occupation at the Dawn of Liberation

Upon his arrival on the Korean peninsula, Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, commander of the United States occupation forces in Korea, was originally supposed to accomplish a mission of "maintaining peace and order until the international

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> The number of U.S. personnel was reduced to 22, 823 in 1948, and the final (temporary in reality) withdrawal of U.S. troops began June 30, 1949 (Cumings 1997, 189, 212).

conflict over Korea was resolved" (U.S. Library of Congress 2006a). Possessing very limited human and social resources, Hodge was expected to pursue the ultimate objective of fostering "conditions which would bring about the establishment of a free and independent nation" (ibid.). However, it was only the end of October when Washington gave general instructions to the occupation authorities about how to govern the occupied territory, establish the military government, and administer civil affairs. Thus, it was the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps and Allied Forces Pacific Area Command that settled the occupation policies in the initial phase of U.S. occupation (Park C. 2002, 125-26).

Although Commander Hodge was an experienced soldier, he was ignorant about Korea. Because the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps of the U.S. Tenth Army had been stationed on Okinawa in Japan, Hodge was informed by the Japanese Government-General that the Korean situation had become increasingly unstable due to communist agitation for independence. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Hodge ordered his troops to "carry out everything according to the customs fitting an enemy country" on his arrival at Korea (Jeon 2002, 81). The unknown country, Korea, located far from the U.S., was nothing but an "enemy of the United States" to Americans. <sup>68</sup> It was an outset of the tragic history that the U.S. occupation started out upon the sole basis of distorted information provided by imperial Japan. As the U.S. military occupation was accomplished and its authority became stabilized, <sup>69</sup> the U.S. established the U.S.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> According to Oh (2002), to American soldiers, the Korean peninsula was, at most, viewed as a "freed land in a hostile area" (4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> The U.S. occupation forces were stationed not only in Seoul but also in other regions. The 40<sup>th</sup> Division took charge of Pusan city and Kyŏngsang province on its arrival on September 22 and Chŏla province was assigned to the 6<sup>th</sup> Division. The U.S. occupation throughout the country was completed when the 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 6<sup>th</sup> Division was stationed on Cheju Island (Kim S. 1996, 115).

Army Military Government as a central state organ in January 1946 to command the whole country (Kim 1996, 115; Park C. 2002, 129). According to the official declaration, "the Military Government Office is the provisional government established by the U.S. forces under the General Headquarters of the United Forces which rules, leads, and controls Korea south of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel of the Korean peninsula during the transitional period of establishing a democratic government of the people, for the people, by the people" (Jeon 2002, 81). As the only lawful authority in the southern part of the peninsula at the time, the military government functioned as an occupation force whose sole mission was to protect and defend the sovereignty of South Korea and maintain civil order (Ko 2000, 219-20) until the establishment of the independent South Korean government on August 15, 1948.

Because the foremost goal of the U.S. in South Korea was to build an anticommunist bulwark by building up a South Korean army, the form of liberal democracy as transplanted into South Korea by the U.S. had many limitations (Park C. 2002, 142-43)<sup>72</sup> and inevitably accompanied militarization. In November 1945, the U.S. military government began the task of organizing Korean military and police forces. Hodge set up the Republic of Korean Army, and a school for training military officers was established in December 1945. The South Korean National Constabulary was organized in January 1946. General Hodge recognized that the term "pro-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> In 1946, the United State Army Military in South Korea consisted of the Headquarters of the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps, the 80<sup>th</sup> Med Gp, the USAMGIK, the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Sp Trps, the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps, the 61<sup>st</sup> Ord Gp, the KBC, the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Engr C Gp.

In the meantime, in December 1946, the military government established the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly to formulate draft laws to be used as "the basis for political, economic, and social reforms" (U.S. Library of Congress http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+kr0023).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> After the end of World War II, as the U.S. occupation in West Germany and Japan sought to achieve two objectives, the building of an anticommunist state and the transplanting of liberal democracy, the U.S. occupation in Korea sought to achieve these two aims simultaneously (Jeon 2002, 124).

American had become an epithet akin to pro-Jap [sic] national traitor and Jap collaborator" (Lon and McCormack 1993, 96). He was concerned that leftist elements would be bound to win in any election. Caught by its own political paranoia, the military authorities dismantled the de facto government, the Korean People's Republic established by Yo Unhyong (Jeon 2002, 82), 73 and chose to work through the Korean Democratic Party and its very conservative, extremely right-wing ideologues (such as landlords and business elites) in order to establish a pro-American government (Lon and McCormack 1993, 96; Oh 2002, 4). The institutions and authorities were inevitably based upon the formal colonial administrative structure, excluding any reformist groups and prohibiting political organizations of lower classes (Jeon 2002, 82).

In the summer of 1946, leading socialists were arrested or driven underground, and violent clashes increased in the fall of 1946 as the Korean peoples' aspiration for liberation and real dependence were denied (Lone and McCormack 1993, 95-96). Threatened by popular protests against the five-year Soviet-American trusteeship of postcolonial Korea and widespread mass movements with leftist tendencies, the military government prohibited any kind of Korean militia, suppressing political movements emerging in urban and rural areas (Cumings 1997, 192). The forces under Hodges's command then trained and supervised Rhee's armed forces in the suppression of all dissenters—invariably labeled "Communists"—and waited to see whether Rhee Syungman could consolidate his power to establish and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> For close examination on the (North) Korean People's Republic and the role of Yo Unhyong in the period, see Choi (2002), Jeon (2002), and Kim S. (1996).

sustain a pro-American government (Johnson 2004b, 98-99). A Moreover, expansion of the National Constabulary into a larger and more conventionally organized army seemed to be urgent in order to adequately defend South Korea from a possible invasion by North Korea. The U.S. provided funds and training to expand the eight provincial units and one capital city unit of the Constabulary from regiments to brigades (U.S. Library of Congress 2006b). As a result, the first president Rhee Syungman's August 15, 1948, inauguration saw tens of thousands of soldiers marching by reviewing stands (Cumings 1997, 212). Militarization by U.S. forces had intensified by June 29, 1949 when U.S. occupation forces withdrew, save for a handful of military advisers (Cumings 1997, 212).

Meanwhile, in late 1945, the first military camptown had been established in Pup'yŏng near the western port city of Inch'ŏn (Yuh 1999, 14; Pak C. 1994, 87), followed by the construction of additional camptowns in Itaewon in Seoul and Hialeah and Texas in the southern port city of Pusan, and some areas in Chinhae, Taegu, Kwangju, and Chŏnju. Camptowns in Tongduch'ŏn were established in July 1951 by the U.N. Police (Tongduch'ŏn Ssisa, 1998; DacuInfo 2004, 143). It is noteworthy that most of the earliest and largest camptowns were established in former

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> The Cheju Massacre occurred under these circumstances. Following the departure of the Japanese, the people of Cheju governed themselves through socialist "people's committees." On April 3, 1948, Rhee's police fired on a demonstration commemorating the Korean struggle against Japanese rule. This incident led to a general insurrection on the island against the police and their attempt to integrate Cheju into the new South Korean regime. Rhee's police, with the permission and support of the U.S., carried out a merciless assault on the people of Cheju, killing from thirty to sixty thousand of them in the course of a few months. On May 13, 1949, the American ambassador to the Republic of Korea, John Muccio, wired Washington that most rebels and sympathizers on Cheju had been "killed, captured, or converted" (Johnson 2004b, 99). It was not until the 1990s that the incident became a public issue in Korea.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> In November 1948, the Republic of Korea National Assembly passed the Armed Forces Organization Act. Under the provisions of this act, the National Constabulary was reorganized into an army comprising seven divisions (U.S. Library of Congress http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?cstdy:1:./temp/~frd\_AcBF).

Japanese military bases or facilities. In Pup'yŏng, in the mid-1930s, for example, the Japanese had built a large supply depot and arsenal to support their troops in Manchuria. In 1945, after the Japanese surrendered, the U.S. replaced the depot with its Army Support Command Korea (ASCOM). It was at this time that the area of Camp Grant, Camp Market, Camp Tyler, and Camp Hayes acquired the acronym ASCOM (Global Security 2006a). Itaewon in the Yongsan district in Seoul, which continues to house the headquarters for the U.S. military, served during the Japanese occupation as the Japanese Imperial Army Headquarters. Before then it had been used by the Qing Dynasty of China. Under Japanese occupation, the present site of Camp Hialeah in Pusan also served as Imperial Army headquarters. U.S. troops took command of Camp Hialeah on September 17, 1945, and remained until the end of 1946. Upon the withdrawal of the occupation force from the area, the American Consulate and the United Nations Organization utilized the facilities until they were evacuated at the outbreak of the Korean War (Global Security 2006b). 76

# 3.2.2. Establishment of the Women's Bureau: Propaganda of Gender Equality

As one of the objectives of the military government was, ostensibly, "to establish [a] democratic order" (Yi P. 1996, 159), the issue of gender equality began to appear in its rhetoric. The Women's Bureau was established on September 14, 1946 through Special Ordinance No. 107, by which the first official women's welfare policy in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> On the other hand, Camp Humphreys is a short distance from the city of P'yŏngt'aek and adjacent to the town of Anjeong-ri which has been most notorious place for U.S. military prostitution. The airfield was also originally constructed by the Japanese and was known as the Pyungtaek Airfield during the Korean War (http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/camp-humphreys.htm).

Korean history was made possible (USAFIK 1948, No.34 (July-August), 254). According to a U.S. document, the Women's Bureau was organized "to coordinate women's groups and unite them in their efforts to achieve recognition and social equality for women in Korean society" under the supervision of the Department of Public Health and Welfare and direction of Evelyn Koh and her American advisor, Helen Nixon (ibid.). The Bureau was divided into four sections, the Children's Section, Labor Section, General Welfare Section, and Administration Section, and its sub-sections were established in each of the nine regional provinces (USAFIK 1948, No. 29 (Feb.), 227). The Bureau's main duty was to advise the military government policies pertaining to "the promotion of the welfare and interests of Korean women" (ibid., 226-27). Its enrolled membership reached approximately 5,000,000 women by May 1948 (USAFIK 1948, No.32 (May), 189).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> In fact, endorsement of women's political rights and guarantee of equal opportunity in education resulted in dramatic changes in women's lives. However, according to Cumings (1997), since the American occupation chose to bolster the status quo and resist a thorough reform of colonial legacies, the military government immediately ran into monumental opposition from the mass of South Koreans (192).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> In order to extend the program of the Bureau throughout South Korea, branches were set up in all mainland provinces. Provincial representatives met monthly at the Bureau in Seoul to discuss their problems and receive guidance in future activities (USAFIK 1948, 34 (July-August), 254-55).
<sup>79</sup> General Lerch, Military Governor of Korea, outlined the functions and duties of the Bureau as

General Lerch, Military Governor of Korea, outlined the functions and duties of the Bureau as follows (USAFIK 1948, 29 (Feb.), 226-27): 1. to advise the Military Governor on policies affecting the social, economic, political, and cultural amelioration of Korean women; 2. to compile and analyze data and to make and publish continuing studies concerning matters affecting the position and general welfare of Korean women; and 3. to formulate standards and policies for recommendation to the appropriate political subdivisions, officials, and instrumentalities of the Government of Korea, pertaining to the promotion of the welfare and interests of Korean women, including but not to limited to:

<sup>1)</sup> Improvement of the working conditions of women;

<sup>2)</sup> Advancing the opportunities of women for profitable employment;

<sup>3)</sup> The welfare of women in industry, agriculture, education, the arts and professions, and the home;

<sup>4)</sup> The activities of women in government service;

<sup>5)</sup> Health, prenatal care and maternity confinement;

<sup>6)</sup> Woman suffrage;

<sup>7)</sup> Control and elimination of prostitution;

<sup>8)</sup> Female delinquency and institutional care:

<sup>9)</sup> Travelers' aid for women and children.

The Women's Bureau presumably embodied the U.S. liberal democratic mandate to pursue gender equality, which seemed to be an essential facet of modernity. <sup>80</sup> The first appointment of a woman director in the government body and the establishment of the Labor Section appeared to be an emblem of women's equal participation in politics, society, and economy. However, the Women's Bureau, underwritten by the notion that Korea could be modernized through U.S. assistance alone, was mere propaganda in a traditional society with a strong Confucian value system in which the subordination of women to men was a central feature. The reality was that the Bureau hardly went beyond holding English language classes, cooking classes, and/or "culture" courses under the justification of "improving" Korean women's etiquette or general education for women (USAFIK 1948, No.29 (February), 227-28). The Bureau undertook no projects that would result in the improvement of women's working conditions beyond offering these several education classes (Hwang 2002, 175).

The magazine, *New Homemaking*, published by the Bureau six times a year, is a good example of its main focus. Although the magazine covered some international events, such as the February 1948 focus on the work of the United Nations, its primary goal was to instruct women how to manage the household and childcare based upon the American ideal of the heteropatriarchal nuclear family (USAFIK 1948, No.29 (February), 227-28). Modernity, in this regard, meant educated women, but educated to uphold the system of the nuclear patriarchal family (Jayawardena 1986, 16-17). Making an ostentatious display of its democratic superiority to both

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> For further discussion particularly regarding the relationship between women and modernity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Korea, please see Kumari Jayawardena (1986).

Korea's feudal customs and Japan's colonial legacies, the U.S. aimed to spread Western values of family and the "proper" women's role throughout the Korean society.

Based upon the Women's Bureau, moreover, the U.S. military government was to construct and control a pro-American (and, therefore, anti-communist) women's network (Hwang 2002, 109). The Federation of Women's Clubs was formed on November 15, 1946, under the justification of "the need for a central women's organization in order to serve as a channel for disseminating information to women's groups" (USAFIK 1948, No.34 (July-August), 255). It was meant to encompass varied women's groups in each province. Yet in the process of constructing a national women's network, leftist groups were excluded from the invitation to join the central organization (USAFIK 1948, No.34 (July-August), 255). The U.S. intention became obvious when one of the representative progressive women's organizations, *Chosŏn punyŏ ch'ongdongmaeng*, was suppressed by the USAMGIK and dissolved in 1947 because of its alleged "communist nature" (Yi P. 1994, 240-45).

In effect, the principle of inclusion/exclusion based upon the notion of "American democracy against communism" was made evident by the appointment of the woman director of the Bureau. The first director Dr. Koh hwang-kyung (Evelyn Koh) was widely known for having worked in "the women's field more than 12 years" and educated both in Japan and the U.S. (USAFIK 1948, No.29 (February), 227). Her academic achievement was splendid when most Korean "ordinary" women did not have even a primary education. After getting two degrees in Japan and then a

Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Michigan in 1937, instead of contributing to the struggle for national independence, Dr. Koh took the lead in "exploiting her national sisters and brothers" as a leader of several pro-Japanese women's organizations and as a demagogue to recruit Koreans to serve in Imperial Japan's military (Chang 2006). Therefore, the appointment was a doubly fabricated propaganda to deliver the message that woman could be "something" in the public area in a liberal democratic country and simultaneously to convey the implicit message that only highly educated pro-American woman could be a high-ranking official regardless of her complicity with the Japanese colonial regime.

## 3.3. Emergence of U.S. Military Prostitution

3.3.1. Regulation of Prostitution for U.S. Soldiers' Security and Health

The U.S. Army Forces arrived in Korea firmly convinced that "the Orient was ridden with exotic and terrible diseases" because of "an absence of any conception of cleanliness and sanitation" (Mead 1951, 218-19) and that the security of U.S. soldiers was therefore threatened. Concern over "poor living conditions accompanied with lack of facilities for cleanliness of the prostitute or her clients" was common among military authorities (McNinch 1954, 145). Therefore, the initial U.S. policy for its occupation forces was based upon so-called "combat against diseases and agitations," including venereal diseases among other communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria, and leprosy (Hwang 2002, 167).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> According to a U.S. report, "despite Japan's endeavor to improve Koreans' general health with "strict quarantine regulations," there seemed no disagreement that "the standard of sanitation for the Korean population remained extremely low" (Public Health Problems of South Korea 1950, 9-12).

In this context, it is not surprising that the first Ordinance signed by the Military Governor of Korea on September 24, 1945, was to establish the Bureau of Health with a Welfare Branch. Each of In several weeks, the Department of Public Health and Welfare with broad powers was established at the provincial level, and the responsibility of this Department fell upon the medical officer of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Company who had had a long combat experience. He conducted a survey of provincial public health and welfare conditions and estimated the needs (Meade 1951, 219-20).

Beneath the concerns about public health and sanitation for Koreans was hidden the crux of the issue for the U.S.: to protect American soldiers from communicable diseases. Particularly, as the naturalization of male soldiers' sexual demand and their urges to consort with prostitutes continued to generate the supply of prostitution in the context of mass impoverishment, the control over "unclean non-American" prostitutes was deemed to be imperative for the sake of American soldiers' heath and welfare.

The military government therefore set up several systems and programs to regulate prostitutes and control VD. Initially, the U.S. occupation forces opened the office of the corps surgeon in Seoul on September 11, 1945, and subsequently established dispensaries and started reconnaissance for hospital sites. Under the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Ordinance No. 18 changed the name of the bureau to the Bureau of Public Health and Welfare to add welfare functions on October 27, 1945 and Ordinance No. 25 dated November 7 1945 established a Department of Public Health and Welfare in each province. Ordinance No. 114 changed the Bureau of Public Health and Welfare into "Department of Public Health and Welfare" and concurrently changed the provisional "departments of health and welfare" to "bureaus of Public Health and Welfare" on October 23, 1946 (Public Health Problems of South Korea 1950, 12-13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Although the official policy of the U.S. has always been to suppress prostitution, sexual adventure with foreign women was regarded as an inevitable part of the modern military experience (Yom 2004, 67-68).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Emphasizing "uncleanliness of non-American women" in addition to stressing "the improper sexual behavior and avarice" was common in the U.S. military's approach to VD education during the two world wars (Yom 2004, 73).

control of the office, medical inspectors started to examine bars and restaurants, and venereal disease control officers inspected geisha districts and houses of prostitution. Based upon their recommendations, prophylactic stations were designated and the primary policy on prostitution was directed (Office of the Surgeon General Department of the Army Washington D.C.1963, 497).

In order to discuss more effective strategies, VD control councils were established involving commanding officers, the chaplains corps, the special services division (providing entertainment and recreation programs and facilities), the provost marshal, and the medical department. The War Department issued the Army VD control program which aimed at the reduction of exposure to VD through the practice of "abstinence" and the supply of knowledge and materials necessary for the prevention of VD among soldiers who were already exposed (1/31/1947, WDAO-C 726.1). In accordance with the program, Lieutenant General Hodge issued VD control measures to commanding generals and commanding officers through Circular 26 (2/21/1947). Essentially, the policy on VD control held commanding officers and non-commissioned officers responsible for the high incidents of VD in their units. <sup>86</sup> Their ineffectiveness in reducing VD rates was construed as a definite sign of inadequate serviceability, discouraging accurate reporting of VD incidents in their units.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> In fact, this plan was carefully prepared before. While the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps was still on Okinawa, the office of the Surgeon of the 24<sup>th</sup> Corps, and that of the Surgeon of Army Service Command 24, prepared medical plans for the allocation of medical responsibilities during the occupation (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> This responsibility was repeatedly mentioned in various documents. See 1/31/1947, WDAO-C 726.1; 1/16/1948, Summary of VD for the week ending January 9, 1948; 4/14/1948, 24<sup>th</sup> Corps, Office of the Commanding General APO 235. The authorities sent out letters to individual commanders whose units had VD rates higher than the total average of the USAFIK. See USAFIK APO 235 (5/20/1948).

Under the new control system of the U.S. occupation, all prostitutes, including allegedly dangerous women as disseminators of VD, became increasingly subject to regular examinations. The military government started VD examinations among kwonbeon (kisaeng) in July 22, 1946, under the direction of the Bureau of Public Health and Welfare (Dong-a Ilbo 24 July, 1946). 87 For more effective checks, the U.S. military established the VD Control Section under the Department of Public Health and Welfare in May, 1947, and introduced periodic examinations and treatment for "entertaining girls," which referred to kisaeng, dancers, bar girls, and waitresses, and issued "certificates of health" (7/27/1948, Headquarters, USAMGIK, APO 235 Unit 2; Chosun Ilbo 12 October, 1947). The U.S. military utilized VD control programs implemented by colonial Japan and introduced the new technique of vaginal examinations.<sup>88</sup> Failure to comply with the physical examination resulted in the loss of prostitutes' licenses (7/27/1948, Headquarters, USAMGIK, APO 235 Unit 2). If infected, women were forcibly isolated and treated until non-infectious. They were sent to National Venereal Disease Centers that took the charge of treatment for the infected (USAFIK 1947, No.27, 175)<sup>89</sup> or locked up in a woman's jail until they were completely free of VD. Upon release, those syphilis patients not considered cured were urged to continue treatment (USAFIK 1948, No 29 (February), 191). Over a year, between May 1947 and July 1948, a total of 14,889 prostitutes were examined,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> The USAMGIK insisted that VD checks were imperative because the previous examination indicated that over sixty percent of the examined were infected (by VD)" (<u>Dong-a Ilbo</u> 10 December, 1946).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Such measures, including both regular and irregular exams, triggered *kisaeng* resistance and some *kisaeng* unions intermittently called for strikes (<u>Dong-a Ilbo</u> 7/24/1946; 12/10/1946; 9/11/1947; 9/24/1947).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> The first National Venereal Disease Center in Seoul was officially opened in December 1947 for the purpose of treatment for Koreans infected by VD. A total of 191 patients were treated in the first month (USAFIK 1947, No.27, 175), but patient load increased by the end of February in the following year to between two-three hundred each week (USAFIK 1948, No 29 (February), 191).

and almost 60 percent of them were founded to be infected with VD (7/27/1948, Headquarters USAMGIK APO 235 Unit 2).90

Interestingly, VD examinations were conducted under the justification of eradication of the "National Disease (*Kungminbŏng*)" that would supposedly threaten the nation's future (Dong-a Ilbo 24 July, 1946). 91 Since VD was highlighted as a "social disease" affecting "the health and welfare of citizens" (Chosun Ilbo 12 October, 1947), it was positioned as an object of elimination "for the sake of Democratic Chosun" (Dong-a Ilbo 11 September, 1947). As such, removal of the "origin of all crimes and a cradle of demoralization" (Chosun Ilbo 19 July, 1947) seemed necessary in the nation-building process in which labeling VD the national disease appeared to be essential to garner people's attention to its "serious" impact on public health. However, the pathologization of prostitution and the demarcation between healthy citizens and prostitutes were, in effect, imperative for the military government to make prostitutes both controllable and continuously accessible.

Thanks to Imperial Japan's registered prostitution system, prostitutes could be confined to small areas "which could be guarded successfully by Military Police detachments" (Report from Joseph T. Caples, Lt. Col. MC Surgeon, Titled "Factors Influencing Rates, VD Rates during the Last Six Months of 1948 and January 1947,"

<sup>90</sup> Regular exams and treatments of VD among "suspicious women" were not exclusively conducted in South Korea. According to Yuki, the U.S. forces in Japan established four "cleaning and disinfecting facilities" to protect American soldiers from venereal diseases, where treatments ranged from seven to ten thousand per week. Also, in Tokyo, unlicensed prostitution quarters were inspected as soon as each unit arrived in Japan. The Office of the Commander of Allied Forces, while demanding the Tokyo Hygiene Department for an explanation of unlicensed prostitution quarters in Tokyo province, ordered stringent medical examinations of women to prevent Allied Forces soldiers from contracting venereal diseases, which one month after led to enactment of rules for prevention of venereal disease. The rules legalized compulsory medical examinations of women suspected of practicing prostitution and became required throughout the country in November of the same year (http://nessaranga.najun.net/bbs/view.php?id=femin&page=1&sn1=&d).

The director of the Bureau insisted that "all people engaged in the entertainment industry should take the examination to eradicate the Kungminbong and Hwaryubong (derogatory indication to VD) (ibid.).

2 February, 1949). Houses of prostitution began to be "on limits" for American soldiers from late 1945, in compliance with the medical officer's request in order to facilitate weekly inspection and ultimately to hold "VD among the occupying troops to a minimum" (Mead 1953, 220-21). Additionally, the VD Council recommended that "enlisted service clubs be placed as near as possible to unit areas or within unit areas," since it was believed that location of enlisted men's clubs away from unit areas had some effect on activities of enlisted personnel (5/11/1948, Headquarters XXIV Corps, APO 235). <sup>92</sup> Therefore, the U.S. military government condoned the so-called "City Club," run by Korean hostesses, as legitimate for the exclusive use of American soldiers, despite recognizing that it was "the center of pimp activity" (Ward 12 April, 1948). <sup>93</sup>

In addition to professional prostitutes, there were two categories of women catering to foreign troops in the second half of the 1940s. The first group consisted of expatriates who had worked as "dancers" in Shanghai and Manchuria during the Japanese colonial period. <sup>94</sup> Many of them worked in clubs in Ch'ungmuro in Seoul

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> The detailed content of the letter is as follows: "If clubs are situated away from units, personnel are exposed to streets and buildings where procurers, pimps and prostitutes are located. Personnel are more likely to visit these haunts when returning to unit areas from service clubs. Council recommended that enlisted service clubs be placed as near as possible to unit areas or within unit areas" (5/11/1948 Headquarters XXIV Corps, APO 235).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> The operation of houses of prostitution in order to reduce VD rates among soldiers has been suggested several times since then. A surgeon general of the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War also suggested that the military itself should operate houses of prostitution (Yom 2004, 84).

Due to the economic depression, beginning in the late 1920s in colonial Korea, many establishments related to the adult entertainment business in the Korean peninsula relocated to China. Japan's colonial government officially encouraged the migration of prostitutes, providing the following rationale: "prostitutes are necessary for people's society and may work inside and outside the nation-state. People's movement crossing national boundaries should be followed by prostitutes' migration" (Kang and Yamashita 1993; quoted in Pyun 1997, 157). During this process, many Korean women, the Korean version of the Japanese *karayuki-san* (overseas prostitutes), were sold overseas (Soh C. 2004, 173). According to an article in <u>Dong-a Ilbo</u> in 1932, around one hundred women were sold each month to Osaka, Hokaido, Sahalin, Taiwan (Yu 1999, 293). Most of them returned to Korea after liberation to be dancers, coffee girls, and prostitutes.

and were known for their independent spirit and audacity (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u> 15 August, 1962). The second group consisted of Korean women who worked in American military units as "house girls," "coffee girls," "typists," hair stylists and laundresses. These women were escorted by American soldiers to dance parties at enlisted men's clubs inside U.S. bases. Because these women were examined once a month, they were believed to be "relatively free from disease" (Letter from Orlando Ward, Major General, U.S. Army Commanding to Lieutenant General John R. Hodge, 21 May 1948). Moreover, their "decent" attitude and "ethical" ideas attracted foreign soldiers, from which the term "Western princess" originated (Chosun Ilbo 15 August, 1962).

In short, the U.S. military government obviously adopted a policy of controlling prostitution instead of suppressing it. Through various controlling apparatuses, including VD councils, VD Control Section, periodic VD examinations, issuance of certificates to prostitutes, and the operation of enlisted men's clubs inside military bases, the military government continuously regulated prostitution. The systems and practices were to protect its soldiers' security and health, while simultaneously fulfilling soldiers' sexual needs, having nothing to do with Korea's interests.

# 3.3.2. Abolition of Licensed Prostitution under the Name of Liberal Democracy

For many Korean women, state-regulated prostitution was considered a legacy of feudal, pre-modern, and colonial patriarchy. Prostitution should be eliminated, they believed, to realize democracy, civilization, independence, and women's rights. <sup>95</sup> To

95 The first actions of resistance against licensed prostitution in colonial Korea occurred in the mid-

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outlaw licensed prostitution, in this sense, was deemed important to transform premodern colonial Korea into a modernized democratic country, which presumably fit the U.S. goal pursued in South Korea (Yi P. 1996, 161-65). Accordingly, the military government prohibited human trafficking by promulgating the Regulation No. 70, the Prohibition of Trafficking of Women and Girls or of Contracts for Such Trafficking, on May 17, 1946 (Pŏpchech'ŏ 1952, 26).

Although the occupation authorities prohibited the sale of women and the contracting of women for sale, they did not outlaw prostitution (Pak J. 1994, 85). Women's organizations, in collaborated efforts of left and right wings, initiated a movement against prostitution, arguing that licensed prostitution was a vestige of Japanese imperialism and an obstacle to democratic order. Thus, on August 10 of the same year (1946), leftist and right-wing women formed the United Relief Association of Women's Organizations (Punŏdanch'ae-ch'ongkŏlsok-kujaeyŏnmaeng) and led an active campaign for the abolition of licensed prostitution (MOGE 2006), based upon the idea that prostitution was deeply related to national health and basic human rights (Yi P. 1996, 161-68). Consistent protests waged by the Association for Abolition of Legalized Prostitution (Kongch'angiae P'aeji Yŏnmaeng) (AALP), 96 whose leader

<sup>1920</sup>s under the leadership of Christian women (Soh C. 2004, 173). In 1923, the anti-prostitution Korean Women's Christian Temperance Union emerged, and in 1924, the Society to Abolish Licensed Prostitution (SALP) was set up with the goal of developing an anti-prostitution movement. Southern Methodists were central in forming these groups. The SALP developed the movement, sponsoring lectures purveying enlightened ideas and even collecting twelve thousand signatures on a petition to the Government General demanding the abolition of prostitution. Influenced by the movement, the Masan Youth League held a lecture on the abolition of licensed prostitution, and in 1925, five to six hundred women living in Wando-gun staged a demonstration against licensed prostitution (Yu 1999, 297-98; Son 1997, 196). Since then, abolition of prostitution has been one of the main issues raised by various women's organizations in Korea.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Despite the AALP view on licensed prostitution as the outcome of Japanese colonialism, modern capitalism, classism, and male supremacy, it could not get beyond the belief that women's chastity was to be prized, concluding that "licensed prostitution is an offering of women's chastity for the pleasure of prodigal men" (New Homemaking 2(1); quoted in Yi P. 1996, 167).

was Kim Mal-bong, and by the *Choson-punyo-ch'ongdongmaeng*, functioned as a strong force of social pressure on the U.S. military government (Yi S. 1994, 240-45). <sup>97</sup>

In response to the resistance and petition for amendment of the law by various women's groups and the press, the military government declared through the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly (SKILA) the basic direction for prostitution policy (Pak J. 1994, 85). Subsequently, Public Act No. 7 of the South Korean Interim Government, the Abolishment of the Public Prostitution Law, was passed by the SKILA on November 11, 1947 with the approval of General Arch Lerch, which became effective on February 14, 1948. The professed objectives of the law were to eliminate the "evil custom" of Japanese rule and promote the democratic principle of "equality between men and women" (Pŏpchech'ŏ 1952, 179). The law appeared to provide a legal basis for punishing both prostitutes and clients, imposing punishment of up to two years imprisonment and/or up to 50,000 won on all persons, including the clients, involved in prostitution, and had a provision for punishing third parties such as procurers. However, the principle of punishing both parties did not apply to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Leaders in the organization, *Choson-punyo-ch'ongdongmaeng*, sought to establish a progressive democratic state and destroy the patriarchal system so that women could be liberated. In this regard, it advocated eliminating prostitution (ibid., 251).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Major General Archer L. Lerch, Military Governor of Korea, presented the abolition issue to the SKILA and the abolition bill was passed as drafted by the SKILA on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1947 (Yi P. 1996, 168-9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> On March 19, 1948, General William of the USAMGIK officially reconfirmed the illegalization of licensed prostitution by promulgating Administrative Order No. 16 (Pak, J. 1994, 84-6; Yi P. 1996, 168).

Articles under the Act No. 7 are as follows (Pŏpchech'ŏ 1952, 28):

Art. 1 The purpose of this Order is to repeal legalized prostitution and prohibit prostitution entirely, from a democratic viewpoint of gender equality, in order to illuminate humanity and eliminate evil customs under the Japanese colonial government. Art. 2 The Order of Commissioner of Police Affairs No. 4 in Mar. 1916 (Regulations on controlling prostitutes under the Licensed Prostitution Act) is hereby repealed.

Art 3. Cl. Na: Person who performed prostitution or who served as an intermediary or provided premises for such act (Punishing procurement of prostitution).

U. S soldiers. Once prostitution was reported, only prostitutes were to be arrested by U.S. Military Police (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u> 22 May, 1948; 14 June, 1948).

Although licensed prostitution was abolished, private prostitution (*sach'ang*) nonetheless became prevalent all over the country. The number of *changgi* (prostitutes), which had been two thousand before abolition, increased to fifty thousand in only nine months after the "official" abolition (<u>Puin Ilno</u> 19 November, 1948) and the number of prostitutes and private prostitution quarters increased to an "uncontrollable extent" in 1947 (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u> 12 April, 1947). Most women were either war refugees coming back from abroad or those suffering from serious economic distress, including daughters of "respectable families," trying to support their families and children (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u> 12 April, 1947; 19 July, 1947). <sup>101</sup>

Insufficient infrastructure and U.S. ambivalent attitudes regarding postabolition measures exacerbated the situation. In October and November 1947, the Director of the Women's Bureau visited all southern provinces, with the exception of Kangwon-do and Cheju-do, to set up Committees on Policies for the Abolition of Licensed Prostitution (*Kongch'angjae P'aeji Daech'eak Wiwŏnhoe*). Since it was difficult for the central government to deal with them, because of the difficulty in providing welfare expenses for post-abolition policies and the "scattered nature of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> In fact, a vast inflow of population and lack of employment coupled with severe poverty led many women to depend on prostitution. South Korea's population, estimated at just over 16 million in 1945, grew by 21 percent during the following year. By 1950 more than 1 million workers had returned from Japan, 120,000 from China and Manchuria, and 1.8 million from the north. The annual rate of increase of births over deaths continued at about 3.1 percent. Since rural areas were inhospitable to newcomers, most of the refugees settled in urban areas; Seoul received upwards of one-third of the total. By 1947 only about half the labor force of 10 million was gainfully employed (The U.S. Library of Congress <a href="http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+kr0024">http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+kr0024</a>).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> The Women's Bureau was to take charge of "control and elimination of prostitution." However, in reality, it played a very limited role under the supervision of the Department of Public Health and Welfare of the USAMGIK (USAFIK 1948, 29 (Feb.), 226-27).

prostitution" throughout the country, the Women's Bureau concluded that problems inherent in prostitution should be solved by provincial authorities. Thus, the committees came to be made up of representative members of the community, who seemed to be "delegated responsibility for the problem," and headed by governors (USAFIK 1948, No. 28 (January), 201-2). The plan for Seoul, for instance, focused on "rehabilitation" of former prostitutes, including health treatment by the National Venereal Disease Clinic and welfare needs to be met by the Welfare Department of the City of Seoul, which would be processed by the women police (ibid.).

Although the Women's Bureau emphasized "rehabilitation, treatment of venereal disease, and assistance in finding alternative employment" (40-Year History of Women's Policy 1987, 61; quoted in Chang and Cho 1990, 7), the Committees did no more than make cursory attempts at education through public lectures and discussions (Yi P. 1996, 170). Any special appropriation from national funds was not available to each province for the rehabilitation programs except small amount of money to provide food and other essentials for former prostitutes (USAFIK 1948, No. 29 (February), 191). <sup>104</sup> Because of lack of living means as well as housing, limited financial support, and shortage of alternative employment, therefore, many of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Several conferences followed in January [1948] with legislators, newspaper representatives, and American advisors on the abolition of legalized prostitution and definite plans of action to be taken (ibid.).

former prostitutes" developed by the Welfare Bureau of the Department of Public Health and Welfare are as follows: 1) welfare funds may be used to provide food and other essentials where necessary; 2) following proper clearance by health authorities, assistance in returning home may be given those who live at some distance with no means of getting there; 3) those unable to support themselves may apply for relief assistance in the regular manner. Relief will be given on the basis of need in accordance with established allowances; 4) it is inadvisable to establish a special rehabilitation program which will maintain the identity of these women as former prostitutes. They will have greater opportunity for adjustment to normal life if they receive the same treatment as any other citizen needing assistance; and 5) no special appropriation from national funds will be available to the provinces for this program (USAFIK 1948, No. 29 (February), 191).

former licensed prostitutes were scattered throughout the country as private prostitutes. 105

Nonetheless, the military government benefited from the policy in that it successfully publicized U.S. moral superiority to Japan. Through the justification of the Public Act No. 7, "to eradicate evil customs of Japan's colonial government," the U.S. represented itself not only as a "benign" liberator from the previous colonial "evil" regime, but also as a symbol of liberal democracy to bring women's liberation with an implicit message that the U.S. would not tolerate any dehumanizing acts associated with women's rights.

It is part of the long history of the U.S. government political strategy to position the United States as the site for the authoritative condemnation of practices conducted in the Third World though the trope of human rights. Since the cold war, the emergence of the U.S. as the leader and bulwark of Western democracies has contributed to formulating American myths that stress the role of the United States as the "exemplar, leader, protector, and savior of the 'Free World'" in the battle against the evil communists (Lieven 2004, 153). As the roles of the U.S. as the "guardian of freedom" and the members of its military as "conqueror[s], liberator[s], and modernizer[s]" have been played on incessantly by official propaganda, political rhetoric, and the media (ibid.), the boundary between myth and reality has been

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> According to a U.S. document, "the greatest need is a place to keep these women if they are forced to leave their present residences. However, this is part of larger existing housing problems, the solution of which will be part of the success or failure of Public Act No.7 Abolishment of the Public Prostitution Law. There are no low-cost homes for working girls, no homes for transients and no accommodations for girl students" (USAFIK 1948, No. 28 (January), 201-2). And drawing on another document, in February 1948, fourteen hundred of the two thousand licensed prostitutes in South Korea, including approximately one thousand in Seoul, two hundred at Inch'on and the remaining eight hundred scattered throughout the country, were to be placed for alternative employment arranged by welfare agencies (2/07/1948, Headquarters XXIV Corps APO 235), which means many of them could not find alternative jobs.

increasingly indiscernible. Such rhetoric has effectively contributed to consolidating the U.S. as the "land of freedom' whose representative can stand in judgment of the practice of other nation-states" (Grewal 1998, 511). As such, U.S. maneuvering for imperial expansion has been justified under the rationale of realization of "democratic dimension" and "civilization." Within this context, the state-regulated prostitution system was abolished in the name of American-style liberal democracy, but regardless of the glib façade of emancipatory rhetoric, the U.S. was interested neither in the elimination of prostitution nor in the protection of prostitutes' human rights. Rather, its genuine concern was to reduce VD rates and to regulate scattered prostitutes, effectively disguising its engagement with and complicity in the continuance of prostitution, as discussed in the following section.

#### 3.3.3. Post-Abolition: Intensified Combat against VD

Prostitution has been illegal in the U.S., and the goal of the United States Department of Defense has always been to "suppress prostitution whenever possible" (Yom 2004, 67). The May Act, 18 USC 1384 enacted by Congress in 1941 made it unlawful, within "such reasonable" distances of military and/or naval establishments, to engage in prostitution, to aid or abet prostitution, or to procure or solicit for the purpose of prostitution for the sake of the "efficiency, health, and welfare of the Army and Navy" (emphasis mine). Therefore, U.S. law dictates that "whoever engages in prostitution or aids or abets prostitution" is to be fined [not more than \$1,000] or imprisoned not more than one year (Title 18. Crimes and Criminal Procedure). The enactment of USAMGIK Public Act No. 7 ostensibly attempted to suppress

prostitution in accordance with this anti-prostitution policy. Former prostitutes became subject to "clearance" and strongly encouraged to "[return] home" or confined in a specific place as objects to be "cured" (USAFIK 1948, No. 29 (February), 191). Despite the principle, however, sex with women was still regarded as an inevitable part of the military experience (Yom 2004, 67-68). 106

Prior to implementation of the Act, all prostitutes had been subject to regular VD exams (USAFIK 1948, No 29 (February), 191) and confined within specific areas regulated by Military Police detachments (2/02/1949, Report from Joseph T. Caples, Lt. Col. MC Surgeon. 726.1), but these practices could not be explicitly forced for all prostitutes who came to be scattered throughout the country. A sharp rise in the VD rates with active prostitutes and pimps in September 1948 embarrassed unit commanders and even reached the Oval Office in Washington, DC, drawing the attention of U.S. President Harry S. Truman (10/05/1948, 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division). According to a 1948 survey conducted by the National Hospital and the Department of Public Health and Welfare in Korea, 66.6 percent of *kisaeng*, waitresses, servants, dancers, and other types of prostitutes turned out to be infected with VD (Sin O. 1989, 57). In most areas in South Korea, the reported VD rates were 100 per 1000 soldiers during 1948 alone (1/22/1949, Headquarters Special Troops USAFIK APO 235).

In this regard, a special meeting was held at the Bando Hotel on May 7, 1948 to discuss the reasons for increased VD rates and coordinate policies and plans for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Yom (2004) argued that the habitual practice has been a part of the modern military experience (68). The hypocritical policy was also evident during the Vietnam War. Thomas, Surgeon General of U.S. Army, notes, "elimination of prostitution is a policy that reportedly is winked at by a number of commanders and medical officers in Vietnam" (84).

overall control activities (5/11/1948, TFYSG 726.1; 8/1/1948, UASFIK APO 235). Many officers pointed out the "recent legislation" as the main reason for "spreading of the prostitutes over the whole area" (5/21/1948, Letter from Orlando Ward, Major General, U.S. Army Commanding to Lieutenant General R. Hodge) and complained that "[e]nforcement of public Act No. 7, outlawing legalized prostitution," resulted in abolishment of control over activities of prostitutes (5/11/1948. Headquarters 24th Corps, APO 235). In an effort to control over prostitutes and pimps, the Provost Marshal organized "vice squads" in Seoul and Pusan areas. After the end of the period when the U.S. military governed Korea, however, military control over prostitution slid further into decline. Unit commanders explicitly complained that "prostitutes and solicitors are gathering outside their gates even though there are no Korean houses within the area" (9/27/1948, Headquarters XXIV Corps APO 235). They thought that because the authority of the Army Provost Court had been removed and full jurisdiction was handed over to Koreans, with the inauguration of the Korean government in August 1948, "the illicit operators intensified their activities" (2/02/1949, Report from Joseph T. Caples, Lt. Col. MC Surgeon, 726.1). 107

The increased U.S. anxiety was related to the Korean government's continuous uncooperative attitude toward military prostitution, which was absolutely opposite to that of the Japanese government that set up comfort station to serve American soldiers. Prior to the Allied Forces moving in to occupy Japan on August

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Prostitutes and pimps tried in the Army Provost Court and sentenced to imprisonment under the U.S. military government, but this practice came to an end with the inauguration of the Korean government in August 1948 (5/11/1948, Headquarters 24<sup>th</sup> Corps, APO 235). Under the U.S. military government, the judge was an active U.S. soldier; there was no jury system, although the court followed the American court system (Civil Network for a Peaceful Korea 2001, http://iacenter.org/Koreafiles/ktc-civilnetwork.htm).

28, the Japanese government ordered on its own initiative the construction of comfort stations for the use of the Allied troops on August 18, 1945. Responding to the August 18 order issued by Hashimoto Masami, the first comfort station for foreign soldiers, *Komachien*, was set up in the Tokyo-Yokohama area and opened on August 27, 1945 and the Recreation and Amusement Association (RAA) was established. Unlike in Japan, there was no institution like the RAA supported by the government in Korea, and even Korean courts were not willing to punish or detain violators of the Act No. 7 including pimps and prostitutes (5/11/1948 Headquarters XXIV Corps, APO 235).

The sense of losing control over prostitutes and the Korean government's continued lack of cooperation led the U.S. military to intensify the campaign against VD among soldiers. VD became highlighted as an "enemy" that would decrease "combat power," thus was "to be defeated" (2/26/1949, No. 726.1 Headquarters USAFIK, APO 235, Instructor's Lecture, "The Eternal Fight," p. 2-3 in the Subject titled "Venereal Disease Control). VD examinations were mandatory among soldiers each week, and each unit held meetings of a VD Control Council every month. Those who already contracted VD were treated and sent to the Rehabilitation Training Center in Chinhae. According to the USAFIK Rehabilitation Center on April 30, 1948, a total of 147 infected trainees out of 22,823 have been assigned to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> The RAA was composed of eight professional organizations including the Tokyo Restaurant Association, the Federation of Tokyo Assignation House Operators' Association, the Tokyo House of Assignation [Brothel] Association Yoshiaki 2000, 180-181). Literally they were owners of Yugwak, *kisaeng* house, Yojeong, Café and comfort stations and the Japanese government invested 100 million yen in establishment and mobilized relevant authorities to be involved (Yuki, http://nessaranga.najun.net/bbs/view.php?id=femin&page=1&sn1=&d).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup>The detailed guidelines distributed by the USAFIK, in 1949, was full of this metaphor for VD, e.g., "the strategy of our enemy, the forces of evil, in this battle for personal purity"; "when we come into grips with the enemy, let us annihilate and destroy the forces of evil" (2/26/1949, Headquarters USAFIK APO 235).

center, 79 percent (116) of whom were infected with gonorrhea and 14 percent (21) with syphilis. Trainees were subject to a 49-hours-a-week training schedule to curb their "rampant promiscuity" (2/02/1949, Surgeon USAFIK. "VD rates during the last six months of 1948 and January 1949." 726.1). In addition to regular testing, the USFIK Indoctrination Team conducted periodic checks at random after the enforcement of the Public Act No. 7. Even though many health officials expressed concern that the use of condom prophylaxis would encourage soldiers to be more promiscuous (Yom 2004, 78), soldiers were required to obtain condoms and prophylactic kits before they obtained passes to go out of their units. Those soldiers who returned intoxicated and late were subject to mandatory prophylactic treatment. 111

In this regard, boredom among the troops increasingly became an administrative problem. Most American soldiers, who were young and unmarried, could not accompany their families to South Korea. Even though brothels had been part of accepted forms of entertainment, and vice activity was seen as inevitable (Brant 1985, 52), young soldiers' "lack of moral and wholesome feminine companionship" was regarded as one of main causes of increasing VD rates (McNinch 1954, 145). Wholesome activities and recreation were strongly encouraged in this sense, ranging from athletic activities and movies to sightseeing

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> The center was closed on September 15, 1948 after the inauguration of the Korean government on August 15, 1948 (8/14/1948, USAFIK APO 235).

Transportation Railway Operating Battalion APO 6; 10/25/1948, Office of the Chaplain Headquarters Special Troops XXIV Corps APO 235; 4/08/1949, General Headquarters Far East Command APO 500.

mingling of young persons of opposite sexes" (ibid.).

tours and attendance at religious services (9/27/1948, Headquarters XXIV Corps APO 235; 10/01/1948, XXIV Corps APO 235). However, facilities for the "wholesome" activities in many areas remained inadequate due to "the normal delays in getting logistic support and the inability of the Army to obtain the necessary operation from the civilian police" (2/02/1949, Surgeon USAFIK. 726.1).

Accordingly, the U.S. military in South Korea was determined to strengthen sex education programs to instruct the troops concerning VD. All commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers were expected to take three one-hour courses to learn how to instruct soldiers under their command on the subject of VD control (2/26/1949 Headquarters USAFIK APO). Sex education materials during World War II mostly underscored that "contracting VD was a form of laziness and irresponsibility that led to less safety and more work for others (Yom 2004, 68). In the instruction program in South Korea, soldiers were indoctrinated in Christian religious morality, personal hygiene, and heteropatriarchal nuclear family values. An emphasis on the virtue of "abstinence" was necessary to lower VD rates and ultimately to ensure soldiers' "strength, readiness, and well-being" (Global Security 2006c). As such, soldiers were assured that abstinence was compatible with manhood. One of the instructor's manuals, released by the headquarters of the U.S military in South Korea in February 1949, asserted that "illicit sexual intercourse does not conform to the noble Army tradition of fair play and sportsmanship" (4) and that a "clean and honest life" guided by self-discipline is "for the strong, mature, and courageous man" (3). In compliance with the emphasis on abstinence, family values were frequently emphasized as a device to protect soldiers from "temptation" by "the

enemy."<sup>113</sup> Family was identified with protecting the "purity" of women—the mothers, sisters, and sweethearts waiting for soldiers to return home, and eventually with the nation-state to whom the war was dedicated. Thus, endangering family is, after all, endangering society and the nation. According to this narrative, the women who seduced American fighting men would subvert the war effort.<sup>114</sup>

However, the U.S. efforts remained rhetorical and contradictory. Although the U.S. military could not help enacting the Public Act No. 7 and ostensibly taking measures to suppress prostitution, in reality, prostitutes were continuously regulated. Service clubs and dance halls were still "legitimate" recreational facilities and commonly used as places of contact between soldiers and prostitutes after the Abolishment. The area around the service club in Inch'ŏn, in particular, became a notorious point of contact between American soldiers and Korean pimps (9/28/1948, 61<sup>st</sup> Ordinance Group APO 901). Based on the belief that "the chances of not contracting a venereal disease from a prostitute were very slight," the U.S. military in South Korea continued to conduct weekly VD examinations and treatments for the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> For example, a military officer instructor emphasized in a lecture, "the use of sex has a way of leaving scars on a man's soul. By staying clean, fighting off temptations to commit adultery and fornication, a man can live with himself, with wife and children or future wife and children more happily than if he surrenders to his desires and appetites which trouble all of us who are men" (2/26/1949. No. 726.1 Headquarters USAFIK, APO 235, Instructor's Lecture, "The Eternal Fight" (2), in Subject titled "Venereal Disease Control").

<sup>114</sup> The identification among individual soldier, family and the nation is obvious in the following: "During such periods of storm and stress, the inspiration of a noble mother, reverence and respect for womanhood, help us to resist temptation and make the right choice. Family, country, their highest good and welfare should always come first. America has a stake in you—make the right choice for America" (2/26/1949. No. 726.1 released by Headquarters USAFIK, APO 235, Instructor's Lecture, "The Eternal Fight," p. 3 in the Subject titled "Venereal Disease Control")

<sup>115 &</sup>quot;The incidence of venereal disease among prostitutes in Korea is the same as it is in the other countries, almost 100 percent. Treatment of a certain individual may result in her being free from venereal disease for one week, one day, or one hour, but longer periods cannot be guaranteed...So, it may be readily seen that the chances of not contracting a venereal disease from a prostitute are slight. An additional survey among *kisaeng* girls and waitresses revealed about sixty percent of them to be infected with one or more venereal diseases" (2/26/1949, Headquarters USAFIK, APO 235, 26 February 1949, Lecture "Treatment of Venereal Diseases and Its Limitations, 1-2 in the Subject titled "Venereal Disease Control")

infected among prostitutes (2/26/1949, Headquarters USAFIK, APO 235, No. 726.1). For instance, the military treated 191 former licensed prostitutes in outpatient service at Sunwha Hospital in Seoul and detained them at the women's jail until they were completely cleared from VD infection (1/07/1948, Headquarters XXIV Corps APO 235). An arrested prostitute was assumed to be a venereal carrier and to be treated as a criminal.

In sum, as Public Act No. 7 was implemented, the campaign against VD among American soldiers was intensified. However, regardless of the official U.S. stance, the legal prohibition of prostitution coexisted with military prostitution as a "necessary evil" for managing American soldiers. Women in prostitution continued to be subject to VD examinations, while treated as not only a "temptress" of American soldiers but also a "carrier of venereal diseases" (Chosun Ilbo 22 May, 1948; 14 June, 1948).

#### Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have explored the ways in which the practice and policies of military prostitution in South Korea were deployed through the two phases of colonization of Korea. I argue, first, that the foundations of two major features of *kijich'on* lie in Japan's licensing of prostitution: red-light districts as a commercialized space with brothels and a government-controlled registration system with compulsory venereal disease examinations. Second, without the Japanese

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Similarly, during WW II, the U.S. Army warned the troops that "women who solicit soldiers for immoral purposes are usually disease spreaders and friends of the enemy," stressing that virtually all prostitutes carried VD (Brandt 1985, 67).

colonial policy enabling prostitution, it would have been nearly impossible to recruit so many Korean women as "sexual slaves" to serve Japanese soldiers. And third, prostitution system for the U.S. military in Korea was encouraged after 1945, with the remains of Japan's colonial infrastructures in conjunction with the U.S. military government's policies on women and prostitution. Because Korean prostitutes were seen as conduits of VD, concerns about the health of U.S. soldiers led to the continued control over prostitution. As a result, legal prohibition of prostitution by the U.S. government coexisted with a kind of regulated prostitution, ostensibly to protect the health of American soldiers.

# Chapter 4: Consolidation of *Kijich'on* in Support of National Security and Economic Growth (the 1950s through the 1970s)

"For half a century, duty in South Korea was officially considered a hardship tour. The one bright spot was inexpensive and widely available prostitution. This was a dirty little secret, but troops who ended up in South Korea quickly found out about it, and enthusiastically enjoyed themselves" (Strategy Page 19 November, 2004).

#### Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which the Korean government began to cooperate with U.S. interests, in the systematic construction and maintenance of *kijich'on* with changes in policy ranging from *tacit permission* to *permissive promotion*, to *active support*. The ways in which local communities responded to the changes and how the lives of women in *kijich'on* have changed are also explored. After the 1953 armistice ending the Korean War, the U.S. military started to build Rest & Recreation facilities around military bases and demanded that the Korean government develop systematic policies governing the facilities, particularly with regard to the control of venereal diseases to ensure the health of soldiers. In compliance with the Korean government's concern about increased VD rates among ordinary people and the moral threat caused by the increased number of prostitutes, prostitution in South Korea, which had previously been scattered throughout the country, began, in 1957, to be concentrated in specific geographic areas where American soldiers were stationed: Seoul, Busan, Daegu and other large cities. As the Korean government began to conceptualize

prostitution as a necessary means to entertain and thus retain foreign soldiers in the midst of an anticommunist war and, later, as a means of ensuring South Korea's national security during the cold war, the increased concentration of prostitutes within and around the Rest & Recreation facilities eventually developed into so-called "camptown prostitution." In particular, the state-building, national security, and economic development priorities of Park Jung-Hee's military regime in South Korea (1961-1979) depended on the utilization of women's sexual labor, thus creating the foundation for the consolidation and development of *kijich'on* for several decades to come.

# 4.1. Warfare Efficiency and Control over Prostitutes: The Korean War (1950-1953)

The Korean War provided the fertile soil for expansion of military prostitution. The force of abject poverty combined with the death and displacement of men during the Korean War further multiplied the number of women who were forced into prostitution in order to ensure the survival of themselves and their families (Yi I. 2004a, 43). Given the high number of foreign troops stationed in Korea during the war, <sup>117</sup> it is not surprising that, by 1951, there were approximately 65,000 prostitutes in Seoul alone, which was up from roughly 50,000 in 1948 (Sin 1989, 58-59). The Korean government virtually revived licensed prostitution, reinstituting periodic physical examinations of prostitutes for VD control and issuing a "health card" to them, under the name of efficient control (Yi I. 2004a, 131-40). At the end of the war,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> According to McCormack (1993), the number of foreign troops stationed in Korea during the war ranged from 214,000 at the beginning of the conflict to 325,000 by 1953 (111-25).

there were approximately 20,000 "Western princesses (*yanggongju*)" in Seoul alone who catered to the Allied Forces (Chosun Ilbo 27 July, 1953).

During the war, "combat against disease" was became an important military strategy. For the Korean government, the presence of VD among soldiers was thought to lower military morale as well as fighting power and to cause restlessness among the troops, eventually operating as a crucial barrier to victory (Sin 1989, 61-62). For the U.S., it was necessary to entertain its combat-fatigued troops in South Korea and simultaneously to suppress VD that might threaten military efficiency and health. In the face of the urgent need for loyal soldiers willing to fight and be killed in a foreign country, the military found it more practical to examine prostitutes for VD than to suppress prostitution that demanded little immediate cost for the military compared to other forms of recreational facilities.

In June 1952, an AFPAC (Allied Forces Pacific Area Command) conference on the problem of venereal disease was held in Tokyo. Following this conference, strong letters were sent out by the U.S. military directing commanders at all levels to intensify their efforts to reduce the incidence of venereal disease. Whereas many units in Japan reported a sharp decrease in VD rates after that, it was reported that "the decline was much more gradual" in Korea, "where opportunities for self-treatment or treatment by civilians were limited" (McNinch 1954, 154). In its response, the Korean government addressed the U.S. pressure to lower VD rates in its the budget for the coming year. \$125 million, 0.96 percent of the total budget of the Department

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> During the period 1950-53, over 5.7 million American military personnel were engaged in the Korean War and 54,246 lost their lives (Kim K. 1982, 325).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> The military special services provided soldiers with Rest & Recreation leaves during which soldiers were flown to Japan and stayed there for 5 days. Despite hotels and other recreational facilities provided, many soldiers ventured out to seek female companions in prostitution (McNinch 1954).

of Health and Welfare, were allocated to anti- VD measures in 1952. Due to such intensive efforts, the VD rates dropped to 30-40 percent during the war, from 52-75 percent before the war (Yi, I. 2004a, 237-47).

Along with U.S. pressure, there were underlying reasons the South Korean government cooperated with the U.S. military to control VD. Because of the anxiety that "brutal foreign soldiers might rape our sisters and daughters," the Korean government established and ran "comfort stations" for U.N. soldiers (Yi I. 2004c, 118-21). By 1957, the number of government-registered comfort stations reached seventy eight in Busan alone, and the number of non-registered brothels was several times that number (ibid., 130).

Protecting "my woman's virginity" was viewed as necessary for separating U.S. soldiers from "ordinary women," and establishing the comfort system to cater to foreign soldiers was considered as "repaying the benevolence of the U.S. [representing U.N.]" (ibid., 125-27). <sup>120</sup> In addition, the South Korean army operated its own "military comfort system" during and after the Korean War, from 1951 to 1954 (Kim 2002; quoted in Soh C. 2004, 173). <sup>121</sup> Meeting soldiers' sexual needs was considered imperative to "inspire morale" and prevent "unsavory" acts (e.g. rape) (Yi I. 2004a, 130-31). <sup>122</sup> The main rationale given for establishing these comfort stations was men's "physiological function" that "desire[s] female companionship and thus

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> According to Lee, I. (2004c), the establishment of the military station for U.N. soldiers was possible under the cooperation of the Korean government, the Korean police, the Korean military, and the U.S. military (121-124).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Although Kim concludes that the Korean army's military comfort women system may be the "unfortunate offspring" of the Japanese colonial legacy, Soh C. suggests that its historical roots can be found in the Korean masculinist sexual culture (173).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> In 1954, the South Korean military multiplied from 100,000 strong at the outbreak of the Korea War, to its current size of 650,000 in 1954 (Moon S. 1998, 90). Due to the increased number, the Korean military considered the comfort system necessary.

naturalizing men's heterosexuality. Control over VD was a necessary process to operate the comfort system and eventually for the sake of Korean soldiers' health and for Korean people (ibid.).

On the other hand, regulation of prostitutes was important not only because of concerns for soldiers' health, but also to ensure national security during the war against communist North Korea. The Korean army commanders of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters in Seoul held a meeting in July 1952 to discuss "prostitution targeting U.N. soldiers (yanggongju)." It reached the conclusion that "women who are not Seoul citizens should move to the southern part of the Han River (Seoul area)," with regards to the "counterespionage policy" and the "anticrime measure" (Chosun Ilbo 16 June, 1952). Because the security threat, rather than only moral threat, was more serious threat to the nation, women who had sexual relationships with foreign soldiers became an object of suspicion as "communist spies" who might "release military secrets" (Dong-a Ilbo 11 April 1952; Chosun Ilbo 16 June, 1952). Surprisingly, however, the Korean government ran a female club for high-profile U.S. soldiers as well as officers and eventually to "pilfer U.S. military secrets," which was called "Nangnang Club" (Yi I. 2003c, 110-14). Mo Yun Suk, who was a famous female poet and diplomat, originally organized the Nangnang Club before the war, and invigorated it at the start of 1951 under government direction. The major activity of these so-called "Nangnang girls" was to attend parties with well dressed and to serve U.S. soldiers' "needs." Kim Hwallan, one of the most representative early Korean feminists and president of Ewha Womans University, actively mobilized female college students as Nangnang girls (ibid., 116-17). To

Korean people, however, these college girls were viewed as *yanggongju* or comfort women (Seoul Sinmun 26 July, 1952; 10 October, 1953).

In short, the Korean War is the intensified gendering process that constituted woman as comfort subject while systematizing comfort stations for soldiers and naturalizing men's (hetero)sexual desire. Utilizing women's sexuality for sake of nation became an ongoing policy of the Korean government.

# 4.2. Spread of Military Prostitution and Public Anxiety about Boundaries: Postwar Period (1954-1960)

### 4.2.1. Legacies of the Korean War

The Korean War ended in a cease-fire—not a peace treaty—in 1953. An armistice agreement was signed by North Korea, China, the Soviet Union, and the United States. South Korea could not sign because, officially, it had not participated in the war because it had relinquished all military authority to the United States. The armistice declared a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that roughly followed the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel (Yuh 2002, xv).

The Korean War left a harsh legacy in its wake. Along with the division of the previously unified country, the war resulted in roughly \$3 billion in property damage, massive destruction of infrastructure, including industrial factories and equipment, extreme deprivation, and more than four million casualties as well as approximately 30,000 widows (Kim K. 1982, 325; Cumings 1990, 770; Yi I. 2004a, 34). These measurable consequences must be considered in tandem with the long-term psychological traumas suffered by the Korean people. As Cumings (1997) recalls,

"South Korea in the 1950s was a terribly depressing place, where extreme privation and degradation touched everyone. Cadres of orphans ran through the streets, forming little protective and predatory bands of ten or fifteen; beggars with every affliction or war injury importuned anyone with a wallet, often traveling in bunches of maimed or starved adults holding children or babies" (303).

Rather than a decrease in militarization and dependence on the U.S., these were intensified after the war. Immediately after the cease-fire agreement ended the fighting in 1953, U.S. President Eisenhower approved "a plan to rebuild warwrecked South Korea into a show window of the free world by using American troops in the work of rehabilitation" (Washington Post 2 August, 1953). It was an intended demonstration of "what the free world can do in bettering the lives of the long suffering Koreans," utilizing U.S. military personnel as "missionaries of rehabilitation" (ibid.). Even though U.S. propaganda and interests mediated the process, in reality, the relief-aids of milk and flour distributed by American troops saved innumerable starving Koreans after the War. Between 1945 and 1976, in fact, South Korea received approximately \$ 5.7 billion in economic and \$6.8 billion in military assistance (Lone and McCormack 1993, 138).

Therefore, American soldiers were viewed by the Koreans as a "Santa Claus" to provide "chocolate or milk" and "savior both from evil" and "starvation" for devastated Koreans (Lee's testimony quoted in DocuInfo, 2004, 15). In addition, under the armistice agreement, Korea was – and remains— technically in a state of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> U.S. economic aids reached \$520 millions during the Korean War and over \$2 billion from 1954 till 1961 (Chung S. 2002). At its height, between 1953 and 1961, U.S. aid financed over two-thirds of all South Korean imports and equaled about 80 percent of total fixed capital formation (Lone and McCormack 1993, 138). Nearly 7 percent of South Korea's GNP between 1954 and 1965 consisted of economic and military aids from the U.S. (Kim K. 1982, 307).

war. <sup>124</sup> To the Korean public, therefore, withdrawal of American troops meant an invitation of "a new communist attack" and another war (<u>Washington Post</u> 19 August, 1954). <sup>125</sup> For decades, Koreans' fear and the reality of living in a poor country provided a strong foundation for justifying the U.S. presence in South Korea. However, the image of American prosperity has also been engendered envy and admiration, and at the same time, negation and hate. Such contradictory perceptions of the U.S. overshadowed *kijich'on* prostitution, as discussed further.

Another legacy of the Korean War was the stabilization and relative permanence of the wartime U.S. military camptowns. The United States army base Camp Casey, located in Tongduch'ŏn since 1952 and housing four different U.S. infantry divisions (3d, 1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 2d), became one of the most notorious *kijich'on* (Moon K, 1997, 28). The camptown was established by the U.N. police forcing Korean residents to leave in July 1951 (Tongduch'ŏn Ssisa, 1998; MBC 2003). Similarly, Songt'an has been another infamous *kijich'on* since 1951 when the 417<sup>th</sup> Squadron came with bulldozers to construct an airfield, which caused one thousand farmers to lose their homes and land (Moon K. 1997, 28). Camp Humphreys, used as an airfield during the war, is a short distance from the city of P'yŏngt'aek and adjacent to the town of Anjŏng-ri, both of which became notorious for U.S. military prostitution. Socalled *kijich'on* culture solidified, therefore, around Yongjugol in P'aju, and Tongduch'ŏn, Anjŏng-ri, and Songt'an in P'yŏngt'aek (MOGE 2001, 18). As U.S.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> In the midst of the escalation of the cold war, the United States actively supported the expansion of the Korean military to compete with the communist enemy, North Korea, by granting various forms of military aid throughout the 1950s and 1960s. The U.S. pumped in approximately \$2 billion during the 1950s and \$1.22 billion during the period between 1964 and 1970 (Moon S. 1998, 90-91).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> In August 1954, thousands of citizens in Seoul poured into the streets in a mass demonstration of protest against withdrawal of American troops, when they heard the Washington's announcement that "four American divisions would be pulled out of Korea within months" (ibid.).

camptowns became widespread, *kijich'on* prostitution began to be officially organized into an R & R system after the U.S.-ROK (Republic of Korea) Mutual Defense Treaty (effective November 1954) (Moon K 1997, 27). In the 1950s, eighteen such camptowns were formed throughout Korea in symbiotic relationship between the U.S. and Korean governments (MBC 2003).

#### 4.2.2. Tacit Permission of Military Prostitution for Survival

The Korean War, because it led to widespread poverty, social and political chaos, the separation of families, thirty thousand widows, and millions of young orphans, forced many women into prostitution. For a lot of girls and women who had lost families and homes, there was no escape from poverty without the financial rewards that could come from prostitution on or near a U.S. military base. Many widows, as the sole wage-earners for their families, actually sought to become prostitutes. In 1957, for example, approximately 40,000 women (Kim Y. 2003, 127; Yi I. 2004a, 43), some of whom became camp followers, flocked to areas where the UN/U.S. forces were bivouacked (Moon K. 1997, 28). Regardless of their education levels or family background (Chosun Ilbo 27 July, 1953), 126 "half-ton trucks full of pathetic women careened onto military bases for the weekend" (Cumings 1997, 303). As Han'guk Ilbo reported that the total number of prostitutes in 1955 was 110,642 and 61,833 of them were catering to American soldiers (Yi I. 2004a, 135), more than half of prostitutes were "Western princesses." 127

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According to other statistics, in 1756 there were an estimated 500,000 prostitutes working in 50dd

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Many of the prostitutes had obtained at least a middle school education. According to a nation-wide survey, 152 out of 2,197 had a high school education and 23 were college-educated women. The majority of them were between 20 and 29 years old (76 percent) (<u>Chosun ilbo</u> 27 July, 1953). <sup>127</sup> According to other statistics, in 1958 there were an estimated 300,000 prostitutes working in South

Because U.S. military bases have served as the major source of legitimate and illegitimate employment, the majority of Koreans residing in camptowns became almost exclusively dependent on the military for their economic survival (Moon K. 1997, 29). In this context, when the traditional sources of livelihood (e.g., farming and operating a family business), had virtually disappeared, the majority of Korean people were naturally sympathetic to women "so poor and so ignorant" (Yuh 2002, 58) who engaged in prostitution as a means of earning their living and ensuring their families' survival."

The term "comfort women" (*wianbu*) to refer to military prostitutes serving American soldiers signals the widespread acceptance of camptown prostitution as an inevitable means to entertain foreign soldiers. This term was commonly used in newspaper articles throughout the 1950s along with such phrases as "prostitutes catering to UN soldiers" and terms like *yanggongju* (Western princesses), or "UN madams" (woman getting a livelihood by serving UN soldiers). This usage continued during the 1960s and 1970s when camptown prostitution became more differentiated from non-U.S. military prostitution.

The Korean government's policy on prostitution reflected its public's perspectives on prostitution, which was, in the decades after the war, regarded as a necessary means to feed Korea's impoverished population. In principle, prostitution

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Korea, approximately 180,000 of them in camptowns (MBC 2003).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> According to a survey conducted among 9,493 prostitutes by the Korean police in 1956, the majority pointed to "poverty" as their main reason for engaging in prostitution (<u>Chosun ilbo</u> 13 April, 1956). Family survival has been often named as the principle cause of prostitution following the Korean War (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u> 15 August, 1962). Similarly, Jeong (1967) was very sympathetic to prostitutes who were willing to sacrifice themselves for their families and their brothers' education (75). <sup>129</sup> 11/25/1955, <u>Kyŏnghyang Ilbo</u>; 11/08/1957, <u>Chosun ilbo</u>; 8/23/1960, <u>Chosun ilbo</u>; 5/17/1962, <u>Chosun ilbo</u>; 7/16/1962, <u>Chosun ilbo</u>; 12/03/1963, <u>Chosun ilbo</u>. In the mid-to late-1960s, there were numerous articles in <u>Chosun ilbo</u> reporting crimes committed against camptown prostitutes by American soldiers that commonly used the term comfort women.

was illegal, but the government did not in any material way attempt to enforce Korea's own anti-prostitution laws. Construction of U.S. bases and the increase in military prostitution after the Korean War could not have taken place without *tacit permission* from the Korean government. Continued periodic health examinations, mostly targeting "western princesses" who were arrested by periodic police raids and the issuance of health cards to prostitutes (Yi I. 2004a, 240) suggest how the Korean government implicitly cooperated with the U.S. military to protect American soldiers from VD. This contradiction— the illegality of prostitution in principle with the acceptance of camptown prostitution in practice— was and remains a lasting feature of the U.S.-Korea military alliance.

### 4.2.3. Anxiety about Boundaries

On the other hand, the spread of military prostitution was accompanied by heightened public anxiety about "boundaries." Since military prostitutes continued, as they had during the war, to live and work among prostitutes catering to Koreans and even with other residents, Koreans became concerned about the "insecure boundary" between "prostitutes" and "chaste" women, between "pure" and "mixed blood"(meaning children of Korean prostitutes and U.S. soldiers), which might cause "demoralization" among "ordinary people" (Dong-a Ilbo 11 April, 1953; Han'guk Ilbo August 9, 1954; December 12, 1955). The fact that prostitutes "mingled flesh and blood" with foreign soldiers an intolerable disgrace to the society that had been racially and socially homogenous (Moon K. 1997, 3). However, frequent conflicts between *yanggongju* ("Western princesses") and other prostitutes over their

"genuine" and "counterfeit" status within the implicit social hierarchies of Korean society paradoxically reflected the insecure boundary between them (Dong-a Ilbo 12 December, 1954). To delineate that boundary necessitated differentiation. It required labeling and classification, which was concomitant with the pathologization of those who came to be considered "counterfeit"— the *yanggongju* and the military prostitutes. These women began to be labeled as *man'guk-nŏ* ("pernicious women to the nation state"), *yanggalbo* ("Western whore"), "parasite," or "filthy woman" (Kyunghang Ilbo, 25 November, 1955). At times, they were described as "imprudently Westernized" women "driven by vanity" (Jeong 1967, 67). The women who engaged in sexual relationships with foreign soldiers that resulted in mixed-race children were regarded as having brought "shame on the national tradition of chastity" (Han'guk Ilbo 9 August, 1954).

This postwar fear with regard to the "blurred boundary" of nation as well as normative gender, race, and sexuality was evident in several civil protests against prostitution. The National Female Youth March (*T'aehanyŏsachŏngnŏnan ch'ongkwŏlgidaehoe*), held in 1953, emphasized that "if we neglect approximately 100,000 prostitutes scattered throughout the country, they would have baneful impacts on our society" (Dong-a Ilbo 11 April, 1953). Prostitutes were positioned as objects "to be intensively indoctrinated in hygiene and mental armament," embodying an "immoral social outlook" to be fixed and monitored (ibid.). Similarly, in 1957, approximately eight hundred female workers in Daegu submitted a petition refusing periodic VD examinations, insisting "we are not prostitutes" (Yi I. 2004, 247). These women were anxious to draw the line between themselves and those working as

prostitutes, whereas the government treated both of them as a same category of people subjecting both to VD exams to be controlled and monitored, drawing the line of demarcation between women who worked outside the home for wages – regardless of their occupation – and those who did not. <sup>130</sup>

The Korean government in response to the public concern about insecure boundaries and social mores contaminated by unchecked prostitution developed a twofold strategy to guard against "degeneration." First, the government conducted VD examinations among all female workers including prostitutes, treating them as one species. The seemingly random checks elicited strong public resistance. The VD examination was a social warning for all women working outside the home (Yi I. 2004, 247-50). And second, the government performed periodic crackdowns on non-military prostitution. In December 1955, the Seoul Police Department strategized the best and most efficient way(s) to extirpate non-military brothels from the city (Chosun Ilbo 16 December, 1955). From late December to January 1956, the police department launched a campaign against pimps, procurers, and prostitutes, including those enterprising "Western princesses" outside the control of the authorities (Chosun Ilbo 27 March, 1956).

Presumably, the ritualistic punishment of non-military prostitution contradicted the tactical sanctioning of military prostitution, yet the public demand for separation of prostitution from residential areas and the government need for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> The term "working woman" has implied "prostitute" in Korean modern society, which has been distinguished from "chaste housewife."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup>Ann McClintock (1995) contends that the image of degeneration exerts social power in two ways: first, social classes or groups are described as "races," "foreign groups," or "nonindigenous bodies"; and second, the image legitimizes state intervention not only in the public sphere but also in the most intimate domestic arrangements (48).

effective control over prostitution and VD met at this point. Once the Korean government became aware of the rapid spread of VD among "ordinary" people (Han'guk Ilbo 12 December, 1955), public discourse demanding that the prostitution be isolated provided a good rationale for the official reorganization of prostitution into more concentrated geographical areas. Along with the *tacit permission* granted to military prostitution, the idea to *draw boundaries*, both physical and rhetorical, as a means of effective control began to be formulated. These tenets remain the foundational principles of the Korean government's policy on prostitution.

### 4.2.4. Separation and Differentiation

Korean objectives to delineate the boundary between what counted as prostitution and what did not fit quite well with the U.S. military's need to gain tight control over the spread of VD. Additionally, separation seemed urgent, because cohabitation between Korean women and American (male) soldiers presumably caused the increased rate of crimes perpetrated by American soldiers against Korean civilians in 1957 when rape, murder, a firearm accident, and the subsequent public protests occurred in close succession (Chosun Ilbo 16 January, 1957; 30 April, 1957; 28 May, 1957; 17 October, 1957). In 1957, the U.S. military and the Korean government agreed to concentrate prostitutes in several areas where American troops and Korean troops were stationed. The U.S. military designated ten bars and clubs in Seoul, twelve in Inch'on, and two in Pusan. In the same year, the Korean Ministry of Health and Social Affairs established eighty-nine VD clinics throughout the country, forty-three of which were clustered in major U.S. military bases in Seoul, P'aju, Pusan,

P'yŏngt'aek, Taegu, and Yangju. Also in 1957, once safety and control over VD were guaranteed, the U.S. military authorities permitted its soldiers to leave the base, which in turn brought about the rapid growth of the surrounding camptowns, or *kijich'on* (Kim J. 1980, 274). The development of these camptowns turned farming villages outside Seoul into "commercial districts of *panjatjips*" (literally, houses made of boards), filled with clubs, bars, convenient stores, pawn shops, barber shops, tailor shops, photo and portrait shops, and drug stores catering to American soldiers (ibid., 288). With the explosive growth of military prostitution, many Koreans began to conceptualize U.S. military camptowns as government-funded brothels. The specific names of cities such as Bupyŏng, Tongduch'ŏn, Osan, Ŭijŏngbu, P'yŏngt'aek, Songt'an, Yongjugol in P'aju, Texas in Pusan, and Kunsan became synonymous with *kijich'on* prostitution (Pak J. 1993; Kim J. 1980, 277).

As *kijich'on* increased as "a center of the consuming service industry" (Kim J. 1980, 274), business owners organized themselves to negotiate with the U.S. military for more profitable business deals as well as effective control over VD, and even proposed legalization of camptown prostitution in the name of national development (Yi I. 2004a, 232-33; 241). This unsettling notion of camptown prostitution as a means to facilitate economic development was discussed during the fourth National Assembly Session in 1960. Since the Korean War, American soldiers had frequently flown to Japan to spend their leaves and often engaged the services of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> For example, Tongduch'ŏn, used to be a deserted small village during the Korean War, rapidly grew to a town of the service industry due to the proliferation of *kijich'on*. The total population recorded 21, 377 in 1955 whereas 10,426 in 1949 (101 percent of growth) (Kim J. 1980, 277).

This assembly was convened during the short-lived Second Republic (April 1960 – May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1961). The Second Republic, in turn, was overthrown by the military coup led by General Park Chung Hee, established in the aftermath of the overthrow of the First Republic (1948-1960) by a student uprising (April 19, 1960).

Japanese prostitutes. Noticing this popular practice, some assemblymen discussed a way to profitably redirect this flow of U.S. dollars. They proposed special measures to facilitate the "consumption" of Korean prostitutes by American soldiers, including the improvement of prostitutes' etiquette, the prevention of VD, and legalization of camptown prostitution (Cho and Chang 1990, 92). As early as 1959, Kim Chu-ho, a police captain, delivered an "enlightenment lecture" for some seven hundred "military hostesses" (*kunjŏbdaebu*) in Sinjang village, Songt'an township, P'yŏngt'aek county, and Kyŏnggi Province (Chosun Ilbo13 March, 1959). As discussed below, the economic rationale of this debate became a reality in the 1960s and became a full-blown enterprise sanctioned by Park Chung Hee's government in the 1970s.

## 4.3. Consolidation of Military Camptown Prostitution: Abolition vs. Systematic Regulation (1961-1970)

The ascendance of Park Chung Hee's junta, following the military coup of May 1961, brought significant changes in camptown prostitution through a shift in policy from *tacit permission* to *permissive promotion*. Based upon the previous government policy on prostitution, the Park Jung-Hee regime intensified the consolidation and development of *kijich'on* with more systematic institutions, reflecting its priorities for state-building, national security, and economic development interlocked with utilizing women's labor and sexuality in the attainment of these goals. Throughout the 1960s, camptown prostitution was a significant source of foreign currency, eagerly pursued by the Korean government, which aggressively directed economic growth based upon

the more organized structures that emerged in the years immediately prior to the coup (Sin 1970; Sŏng and Chang 1970). These structures included, so-called "special districts" (*t'ŭkjŏngguyŏk or t'ŭkjŏngjiyŏk*), the Tourism Promotion Law, and the Korean American Friendship Society (KAFS). Due to Korean government support and the U.S. military's unwillingness to get involved in Korean domestic concerns, *kijich'on* enjoyed its heyday. <sup>134</sup>

### 4.3.1. The Prostitution Prevention Law and Special Districts

Immediately after the coup, the junta proclaimed the Prostitution Prevention Law (*Yullakhaengwidŭng Pangjibŏp*) to replace the Public Prostitution Elimination Law issued by the U.S. military, <sup>135</sup> and in April 1962, the Korean government signed on to the United Nations' 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. This legal change, along with the acknowledgment of the international convention, turned out to be a rhetorical reassertion of the illegality of non-military prostitution. In 1962, the junta established 104 "special districts" (*t'ŭkjŏngguyŏk or t'ŭkjŏngjiyŏk*), including thirty-two military camptowns, where prostitution was not only legally permitted, but also closely monitored by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Law (Pak J. 1992, 111; Chosun Ilbo 29 March, 1962).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> The U.S. officials in the 1960s had cautioned against active involvement in local affairs of health and hygiene. They were afraid that "such dealings or recognition of community health inspections and [medical] treatment tend[ed] to indicate official [USFK] approval [of prostitution]." (Inspector General of the EUSA in 1964; quoted in Moon K. 1997, 101).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Originally the law was enacted during the Second Republic (April 1960 – May 16, 1961). According to a newspaper article in December 1960, "the government considers the enactment of the Prostitution Prevention Law to replace the Public Prostitution Elimination Law. Despite the completion of the draft, the measures of protection and direction for former prostitutes are concerned... the aftermath of the law..." (Chosun Ilbo 10 December, 1960).

The official rationale for the special districts was "to move away from the prosecution of prostitutes and guide them to rehabilitate in 'benevolent areas' through saving money from prostitution to leave for other occupations" (Chosun Ilbo 29 March, 1962). Yet this convoluted justification was overshadowed by the conventional understanding of Koreans that "the prostitution prevention law would be an ideal" and that "the existence of private [non-military] prostitution is the inevitable reality" (ibid.). This discourse of "inevitability" was based upon the naturalization of male sexual desire, which was obvious in the original proposal by the fourth National Assembly Session in 1960 as discussed above: "as the majority of the troops are single and eager for entertainment [sex] by human nature, it is better to provide special facilities" (Cho and Chang 1990, 92). Because foreign currency was a necessary resource for reconstructing Korean society and moving it toward capitalist industrialization (Lone and McCormack 1993, 142-45), "to be prepared for foreign visitors at various upcoming international events" was another practical reason for the establishment of special districts (Chosun Ilbo 29 March, 1962). In this context, the number of special districts grew to 145 by 1964, of which 60 percent were in U.S. military camptowns (Cho and Chang 1990, 13). According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in 1964, there were seventeen special districts in Seoul alone, including Jong-ro, Ch'angssin-dong, Hŭngin-dong, Do-dong, and Samgakchi (Chong 1967, 66). <sup>136</sup> As recently as 1989, the Korean government – even after the demise of the military regime – proclaimed that it would permit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> The total number of special districts reached seventy-five in 1967, drawing on 1969 Public Health and Social Welfare's statistics. The number was reduced to seventy-one in late 1969, and a majority of them were concentrated in Kyŏnggi Province (twenty), South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province (twelve), Kangwŏn Province (nine), and Seoul (seven) where U.S. military bases were concentrated (MHSA 1969).

prostitution in the "areas in which prostitutes are monitored." It is in this context that the police have suspended the penalization of prostitution in the special districts and "special tourist hotels" where foreigners are the chief clientele (Bae 1989; Kim H. 1990, 90, 96).

The existence of the special districts meant a revival of licensed prostitution, both in camptowns and private brothels, in the name of "protection" of prostitutes from abusive pimps or bar owners and "guidance" into "the right path" (Chong 1967, 84). Women over twenty-years-old who registered at a regional Public Health Center and had regular VD exams could officially work as "prostitutes" (ibid., 69). According to Kim Yŏn-Ja (2005), each bar area servicing the U.S. military had (and continues to have) an on-site VD clinic under the control of the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare with assistance from the Korean police. A VD check-up was required every month under the supervision of American military doctors (Kim Y. 1995, 10). In the Tongduch'ŏn area, if a woman tested positive for a venereal disease, she was taken to the Soy San Hospital, which was called "Monkey House" because it served as both the VD clinic and a detention center (Ahn 1995, 18). In Kunsan, "America Town," which had a structure similar to a corporation, with a president and several executives, was established with the support of the Korean government (MBC 2003). This was a blatant expression of the hypocrisy at the foundation of Korea's official policy toward prostitution: systematic regulation took place below the surface of attempts at abolition. Even though the Korean government officially abolished the special districts in 1970 (Puyŏhaengchŏng 40 Years 1987, 111), and the Ministry of Internal Affairs began "closing them down" in 1972 in light of "social creasing" (Pak

J. 1994, 111), approximately seventy such districts still remain in operation with the permission of the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (Moon K. 1997, 42; Pak J. 1994, 111).

4.3.2. The Tourism Promotion Law and the Korean American Friendship Society

The Tourism Promotion Law was proclaimed in August 1961, three months before the promulgation of the Prostitution Prevention Law, and the Korea International Tourism Corporation was established in 1962 (Shin 1991, 64; KNTO). Under the Tourism Promotion Law, camptown clubs exclusively catering to American soldiers became "special tourism facilities businesses" (*t'ŭksu kwankwangsisŏl ŏpch'e*) and enjoyed tax-free alcohol (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u> 12 February, 1967). These clubs, in turn, organized the Special Tourism Association (*t'ŭksu kwankwang hyŏphoe*), whose major activity was managing camptown prostitution. In accordance with the Tourism Promotion Law, each camptown club was required to pay \$500 per month into government coffers, and noncompliance could lead to the withdrawal of business approval by the government (Sŏng and Chang, 1970, 132).

The other element of the institutionalized structure of camptown prostitution was the Korean American Friendship Society (KAFS; *han'michi'nsŏnhoe*), which evolved from a June 1962 lecture on the promotion of "Korean American Friendship" intended to alleviate the tension arising from violence against Korean civilians committed by American soldiers.<sup>137</sup> The KAFS became a formal channel to deal with

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> American soldiers, in spite of the rise of violent crime against Korean civilians, were never subject to Korean criminal courts. On January 6, 1962, American soldiers killed two local farmers because the farmers collected firewood in off-limit areas. This triggered a series of protests by college students in

the relationship between Korean civilians and American soldiers in camptowns with the signing of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in 1966, which became effective on February 9, 1967 (Chon 1991, 170). <sup>138</sup> Convening bimonthly, the KAFS was composed of a Korean chair, an American chair, and a dozen members, commonly including the mayor of a host city, its police chief, Korean Central Intelligence Agency officers, the president of the Korea Special Tourism Association, and the president of a local hospital, as well as commanders and military police advisors of the U.S. Army. The society's central office was located in Seoul, with local branches in almost all the camptowns. Since its creation, the KAFS, in the name of friendship promotion, has managed tensions between Korean civilians and American soldiers, often stemming from serious violence against civilians by soldiers (Mal Magazine 1991, 170-172). But in practice, the KAFS worked to pressure bar owners to improve the quality of service to U.S. soldiers (Chosun Ilbo 14 February, 1967), or as a means for some Korean people in high profile to boast about their "close relationship with Americans" (Mal Magazine 1991, 172). Moreover, it turned

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Seoul. On June 6, 1962, students of Korea University issued the following statement: "We cannot hold our indignation against humiliating savagery committed against Koreans by some insensitive Americans any more, and rightly demand that both Korea and the United States as sovereign states establish an agreement, through rational means, which clarifies the rights and responsibilities of both countries and protect basic human rights (Committee of Noguni to Maehyangri 2001, 274). Responding to the crime and the subsequent protests by college students, Park Chung Hee, then the Chair of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction, ordered a meeting of ministers to mitigate the tension. As a result, the week of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, American Independence Day, was made into the Korean American Friendship Week during which the following events were choreographed: 1) Presenting awards American soldiers who performed good deeds, 2) dispatching students to "entertain" American soldiers, 3) national tour of "comforting" show for American soldiers, and 4) strengthening a national campaign to promote Korean American friendship (Chosun Ilbo 29 June, 1962).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> The full term is "Agreement Under Article IV of the Mutual Defense Treaty Between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of the United of States Armed Forces in the Republic of Korea." The SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) is composed of three parts, including Agreement, Agreed Minutes, and Revised Agreed Understanding (National Campaign 1999, 485).

out to be a suppressive institution to control and supervise military prostitutes in the 1970s and 1980s.

### 4.3.3. Heyday of Kijich'on

The organizational and administrative arrangements discussed above worked to consolidate camptown prostitution, which was in its heyday by the 1960s. In April 1964, the Tongduch'ŏn area in Kyŏnggi Province had approximately 10,000 camptown prostitutes, including 3,000 so-called "comfort women" registered with the Health Section of the Military and the Military Police Corps of the U.S. Army, and a larger number of street walkers (*hippari*) who were not registered (Chŏng 1967, 66). The number of unregistered prostitutes was estimated on the basis of the conventional knowledge that on average, there was one prostitute per two or three American soldiers in camptowns in the 1960s (Pok 1994, 179). Geographically, the Kyŏnggi Province had the largest concentration of camptown prostitutes, accounting for 53.3 percent of the total number of registered military prostitutes, because U.S. military bases were concentrated in that province. The next largest concentrations were in Seoul (2,231), Pusan (2,182), and North Kyŏngsang Province (1,113) (Chŏng 1967, 66-67).

The Korean government actually sought national economic growth through more institutionalized camptown prostitution. <sup>140</sup> To the Korean government, the so-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> Similarly, according to Kim J. (1980), the number of wianbu in Tongduch'ŏn reached approximately 7,000 during the heyday of *kijich'on* from 1962 to 1968 (284). Ŭijŏngbu had about 3,200 registered "comfort women" in 1967 (Chosun Ilbo 14 February, 1967).

<sup>140</sup> In addition, Park's regime tried to contain "undesirable foreign influences" on Korean society via the separation and isolation of kijich'on from prostitution catering to Koreans. According to the EUSA (1965), "Excessive restrictions measures [regarding prostitution]...may be objected to by certain segments of the Korean population...since it would mean that the mobility of the Korea female

called "kijich' on economy" was provided an influx of U.S. dollars into the South Korean economy, which, according to Korean pundits and policymakers, would encourage foreign investment and, with it, the importation of the technologies of industrialization (Sin 1970, 30). Camptown prostitution as a special tourism industry enabled the nation to earn foreign currency without start-up capital, connoting the advantages of a camptown economy over other kinds of industry that required startup capital be supplied through foreign loans. In 1964, when total Korean exports were roughly \$100 million, camptown clubs catering exclusively to American soldiers earned almost \$10 million, accounting for approximately 10 percent of foreign earnings (Han'guk Ilbo 10 February 2004). In general, U.S. troops contributed 25 percent to South Korea's GNP in the 1960s (Moon K. 1997, 44) and approximately 46,000 Korean workers in camptowns earned \$70 million in 1969 alone (Sŏng and Chang, 1970, 134). The economic significance of camptown prostitution in the 1960s was well reflected in a series of concerned responses to the impending withdrawal of American troops in 1970 in the aftermath of the Nixon Doctrine proclaimed in Guam in July 1969, as discussed later.

# 4.4. Social Purification and Tight Control over *Kijich'on* for the Sake of National Security, Economic Development, and the *Yushin* Regime (1970-1980)

The Nixon Doctrine, combined with Park's desire to stay in power, resulted in explicit government involvement in running and controlling camptown prostitution as an integral part of tourism, a source of economic development, and the basis of

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national in close, continuous contact with the American would be heightened to the extent that she would infiltrate in hitherto 'purely Korean' residential areas" (Moon K. 1997, 39).

national security. This section examines that as the Korean government's yearning for foreign currency utilizing women's bodies began to be manifest, control over kijich'on prostitutes was increasingly tightened with the shift in emphasis of policy from *permissive promotion* to *active support*.

### 4.4.1. The Nixon Doctrine and the Anxiety of National Security

The Nixon doctrine was proclaimed in Guam in July 1969, clearly signaling that the U.S. would reduce its involvement in other nation's affairs. 141 Before Richard Nixon became president, South Korea was regarded as a strategically important area for American national security interests as a key "buffer territory" and "counterrevolutionary [e.g. anti-communist] force." The country was also crucial in the continued defense of Japan (Yim 1982, 293). But the Nixon Doctrine, in principle, emphasized U.S. "national interests" and "shared responsibility for defense" (ibid., 293) with a strong message of "total military disengagement from South Korea" (Cumings 1997, 359). For South Korea, this meant the rapid phasing-out of economic aid and the withdrawal of one-third of U.S. troops by the end of 1971 (Lone and McCormack 1993, 148).

Once the departure of 20,000 U.S. troops had become a reality <sup>142</sup> (even though 50,000 Korean soldiers were still fighting on the side of the United States in

On July 24, 1969, President Richard Nixon, en route to Guam, told reporters that the U.S. would seek to reduce its military involvement in Asia and encourage the "Asianization" of conflicts on that continent. This change of foreign policy of the U.S. was originally called the "Guam Doctrine" but later became known as the "Nixon Doctrine" (Moon K. 1997, 58).

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By the end of 1971, U.S. forces in Korea had been cut by 20,000. The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, one of two divisions that had been in Korea since 1955, and three Air Force fighter squadrons were withdrawn from the full force of 64,000, leaving approximately 43,000 in South Korea (Moon K. 1997, 59).

Vietnam), <sup>143</sup> the general reaction in Korean society was one of shock (Moon K. 1997, 58-60; Cumings 1997, 359). <sup>144</sup> Koreans expressed fear that "United States would abandon infant-like Korea," which reminded Koreans of the tragic situation prior to the Korean War (Kim J. 1970, 140). Korean people believed that U.S. troops were in South Korea to prevent North Korean troops from invading. They were anxious, therefore, that South Korean troops would be left alone to hold off the North Koreans if U.S. troops went away and they would be unable to do so. Emotionally to Koreans, the Nixon Doctrine was a betrayal, because it broke a previous promise that "the U.S. has no plan to reduce the present level of U.S. forces in Korea" (Washington Post 2 November, 1966). In his 1966 request to Korea to dispatch its troops to Vietnam, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson promised that "the U.S. would continue its military support of Korea," assuring South Korean President Park of his strong support for the Korean second five-year plan (ibid.). In return for sending troops to Vietnam, the Korean government received financial and military assistance from the U.S.

Yet, the fear was not just about national security but also about the national economy. For many Koreans, it was about survival, because, as discussed above, U.S. camptowns were a significant source of livelihood for a large number of people in this war-stricken society. As the Department of Tourism and Transportation of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> To the Korean government, participation in the Vietnam War presumably meant a "rush in funds in foreign exchange and U.S. assistance, not to mention the army combat experience with a general sense of pride in helping the weaker Vietnamese." It was a good chance for Korea to boost its economy as well as to develop technology. Consequently, a total of 340,000 Korean troops served there between 1966 and 1972 (Loan and McCormack 1993, 147).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> According to Moon's observation, "when U.S. Ambassador to Seoul William Porter announced the troop reduction to President Park on March 26, 1970, the Korean government hit crisis mode in its relations with the U.S. and its security posture vis-à-vis the North. The general reaction was shock: The <u>Korea Herald</u> reported that the '20,000-man U.S. troop withdrawal was first regarded as a bolt from the blue sky" (ibid., 60). By December 31, 1973, the U.S. had removed 24,000 troops from South Korea (Kwak 1982, 228).

Kyŏnggi Province estimated in 1970, the so-called "Western princesses" earned \$8 million annually, and each of these women supported an average of four additional family members. Moreover, the withdrawal of American soldiers would affect not only prostitutes and their families, but also local business people who ran dry cleaning and laundry shops, hair salons, and convenience stores (Sŏng and Chang, 1970, 131). To calm public concerns, the Korean government proclaimed several "relief" measures such as "special relief aid" for the unemployed, including money and grains (Chosun Ilbo 16 February, 1971), a "business tax cut" for bars and clubs (Chosun Ilbo 17 February, 1971), and "allocation of relief money" to *kijich'on* (approximately 45 million wŏn or approximately \$130 thousand in 1971 terms) (Chosun Ilbo 21 March, 1971).

To the Korean government, the reduction in American troop strength meant a significant decrease in the amount of foreign currency available for the South Korean economy. Testifying in a National Assembly session, Kim Hang-yŏl, director of the Economic Planning Board which administered the Five-Year Economic Development Plans, replied that the annual amount of foreign currency earned from the U.S. military stationed in South Korea was approximately \$160 million, of which \$43 million came from sales of goods and services directly to American soldiers (Sŏng and Chang 1970, 130; 138). This category of direct sales would include revenue from camptown prostitution. The reduction of American troops by 30,000 would decrease the acquisition of foreign currency by \$80 million per year (ibid., 130). Such sense of crisis caused the Korean government's reconceptualization of camptown prostitution

 $<sup>^{145}</sup>$  In 1970, there were approximately 4,000 (registered) prostitutes in Kyŏnggi Province alone, including Tongduch'ŏn, P'ochŏn, and Ŭijŏngbu (ibid.).

not only as an integral part of "national economic growth," but also as "self-reliant defense" (*chaju kukbang*) that had been widely promulgated since at least 1971.<sup>146</sup>

# 4.4.2. The Camptown Purification Movement and VD Control

During the Vietnam War, U.S. Army commanders were concerned about the high rate of VD among U.S. soldiers, because disease might affect "the capability of the overseas command to fulfill its mission" and called for "adequate indoctrination and education in health subjects" (Yŏm 2004, 68-69). Without a doubt, the number of VD-infected prostitutes was also high in Korea. According to a survey conducted by the Korean National Institutes of Health in 1969, 32 percent of camptown prostitutes, in general, and 63 percent of registered prostitutes in Tongduch'ŏn, in particular, suffered from gonorrhea (Chosun Ilbo 13 March, 1969). Surprised by these statistics, U.S. military authorities in Korea waged a campaign to educate servicemen about VD and preventive measures, instituting various "contact identification systems" to trace the human source of each man's illness (namely, the prostitute) and began to aggressively dictate to the Koreans acceptable standards of health and hygiene (Moon K. 1997, 94, 101). To the U.S., "safe" amenities were needed to entertain its troops stationed near the DMZ, which were regarded as doing "hazardous duty"

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> For the idea of "self-reliant defense," the Park's regime founded the Research Center for Defense Science (*kukbang kwahak yonguso*) in 1971 in order to utilize military technology transferred from the U.S. and instituted monthly civil-defense training (*minbangwi hullyon*). In addition, in 1974 it launched a long-term, systematic military buildup plan (*yulgok saop*), which was supported by heavy industralization begun in 1973. Since March 1978, the Team Spirit—coordinated military exercise between South Korea and the United States—has been a routine. From 1973 (to 1988), military fund (*pangwi songkum*); from 1975 to 1991, it also levied a defense tax (*pangwise*) (Moon S. 1998, 92). <sup>147</sup> Yom further indicates, a widely-held sentiment throughout the United States that VD was curable, at its worst, a temporary inconvenience due to the availability of antibiotics, worsened the situation (ibid.).

(Washington Post 4 April, 1968). 148 Clearly, education programs were not sufficient for soldiers in the Vietnam era, whose sexual behavior was regarded as "a sphere of personal autonomy over which the military held very little rightful authority" (Yom 2004, 68). The U.S. military officials began to strongly signal the Korean government to take on official responsibility and accountability for camptown prostitution. Due to the Nixon Doctrine and the subsequent reduction of U.S. troops in Korea, the Korean government seemed to do no more than bow to events beyond its control. On December 22, 1971, Park ordered the establishment of the Base Community Clean-Up Committee (BCCUC), or in Korean, the "Purification Movement," and the formulation of "purification policies" for U.S. military camp areas (Moon K. 1997, 75-76). 149 The BCCUC's VD-prevention program consisted of increasing the registration of women (to reduce the number of streetwalkers avoiding VD exams), enforcement of regular VD examinations for the women, improved examination and treatment techniques, construction and renovations of VD clinics and detention centers (for infected women), and cooperation with U.S. military authorities on "contact identification" (ibid., 97). 150

The Korean government allocated a total of 380 million won in 1971-72 (approximately \$1 million in 1971 terms) to improve health and sanitation in camptowns, with 224 million won (approximately \$600,000) earmarked for the prevention and treatment of VD (ibid., 80). Elating a safer environment was not only

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> In April 1968, the Pentagon officially authorized the hazardous duty pay for approximately 4,000 troops who would get an extra \$65 a month above regular pay (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> U.S.-Korea Status Forces Joint Committee (JC), established in 1967, set up the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Civil-Military Relations in September 1971, and initiated the campaign (Moon K. 1997, 57-58; 182).  $^{150}$  225 million won was allocated to projects aimed at the prevention and treatment of VD (ibid., 97).

to ensure soldiers' health and security but also to enhance economic profits. In fact, the rapid growth in VD, along with the use of illegal drugs, was hugely problematic in South Korea, not just because of social mores, but also because regional businesses suffered. 151 Because camptown prostitutes were regarded as a first medium for American soldiers to get to know Korean culture, women's proper behavior and hygiene were important to enhance the national image. Since then, safer and healthier club environments and prostitutes linked to better business with more foreign currency and improvement of Korea's national image, "to give a cleaner impression" "to foreigners (Americans)" became representative slogans of camptowns (Chosun Ilbo 6 March, 1977; 13 March, 1977). The economic perspectives led to voluntary cooperation of bar owners in the tightened control over camptown prostitutes. Due to the collaborative effort among the U.S. military, the Korean government, and regional business owners, the Ad Hoc Sub-Committee on Civil-Military Relations could announce the decrease of VD rates from 5.7 percent in 1972 to 4.6 percent in 1973 (Chosun Ilbo 2 March, 1973).

4.4.3. October *Yushin* and Justification of the Authoritarian Regime: *Kijich'on* Subject to Social Cleansing

In addition to the large disparity in power between the U.S. and Korea, a shift in domestic political environments in Korea, centered on the *Yushin* (Revitalization)

Constitution and its justification and maintenance, was the driving force behind the Korean government's control effort concerning *kijich'on*. In 1972, Park Chung Hee

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> Soldiers addicted to narcotics used all their funds to purchase expensive illegal drugs, leaving bars and liquor store owners with decreased revenue. These same soldiers, who spent the little money they had left to purchase the services of prostitutes, also enticed women to use drugs, thus resulting in a shift from alcohol to narcotics as the recreational substance of choice (Bok 1994, 222).

proclaimed an emergency decree called the October *Yushin*, essentially "a coup-in-office or an executive coup." The new constitution, the *Yushin* Constitution, abolished presidential term limits and called for indirect presidential elections. The president was given the power to appoint one-third of the members of the legislature. Thus, political power came to be concentrated in the hands of one person, Park Jung Hee (Kim S. 2000, 57). Park justified his draconian measures as "Korean-style democracy" that would allegedly avoid "waste" and "inefficiency" (Cumings 1997, 359; Kim S. 2000, 57). To be sure, it was also a reaction to the Nixon Doctrine: If U.S. President Richard Nixon was declaring his independence from America's cold war commitments in the Asian region, Park would, in response, declare "Korean independence in politics, economics and national security" (Cumings 1997, 359). 153

Regarding *kijich'on* issues, on the surface, the Korean government seemed vulnerable to U.S. demands, and more cooperative attitudes were presumably necessary to retain American troops and eventually to improve U.S.-Korea relations. But, at the same time, the *Yushin* regime called for a social cleansing as part of the socialled *Yushin* spirit. Under the emergency decree of November 1972, *kijich'on* became subject to intensive control of drugs (Chosun Ilbo 29 October, 1972; 3 November, 1972), resulting in the arrest of ten "abusive pimps" who would be tried

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> Kim Sunhyuk (2000) explains its background as follows: In 1971, the economy was in deep trouble, and Park's image was considerably damaged by the hardly justifiable constitutional revision in 1969. Park Chung Hee managed to revise the constitution to allow a third presidential term for himself, despite violent anti-government protests by student groups and opposition politicians. However, after the presidential election in 1971, when Park Chung Hee ran a very close race with opposition candidate Kim Dae Jung (who later became president of Korea (1998-2002)), he realized he would not be able to survive another presidential election. He needed a new, drastic way to extend his tenure, bypassing political competition as much as possible (57).

Cumings explains that the Nixon Doctrine impacted the Korean government in many ways, including the emergence of a complex mixture of rigid authoritarianism, the dramatic change in the political economy, and some quick footwork in foreign policy (ibid.).

by "strict" court-martial (Chosun Ilbo 10 December, 1972). Concomitantly, the dark side of *kijich'on* as "the origin of social vices" and "a rotten apple," which might negatively impact communities, began to be highlighted (Chosun Ilbo 3 November, 1972). In other words, *kijich'on* as a whole, rather than individual prostitutes, was defined as a social evil or waste, imbued with drugs, sex, and violence to be purified or cleaned.

In fact, it was not unusual to witness drug use and violence in *kijich'on*.

Repeated violent crimes of U.S. soldiers against Korean civilians and frequent fights between U.S. soldiers and Korean residents as well as between black U.S. servicemen and their white colleagues could be easily observed in *kijich'on* (Chosun Ilbo 9 July, 1971; 14 July, 1971). Tongduch'ŏn, for example, was called "little Chicago" after the various crimes and conflicts that occurred between white and African-American soldiers (Kim J. 1980, 275). As a result of these conflicts, the DMZ took on an additional meaning as "Dark Man's Zone" which reflects the number of African Americans serving there (Sturdevant and Stolzfus 1992, 178).

Women's everyday lives in *kijich'on* were full of "dreadful terrors" (Kim Y. 1995, 10). Such daily incidents had been neither noticed nor properly publicized in the media; however, the murders of several camptown prostitutes occurred during 1967-72, and the mainstream media reported the incidents with keen interest. 155 It can be argued that the media's reportage of these frequent incidents of violence signaled

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 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> For a more detailed explanation about the racial clashes that occurred in Anjeong-ri (Camp Humphrey area) and Yongsan in the spring and summer in 1971, please refer to Moon K. (1997).
 <sup>155</sup> The murders of several camptown prostitutes include Songt'an in February 1967, Tongduch'ŏn in November 1967, Itaewon in February 1968, Inch'ŏn in September 1968, and Tongduch'ŏn, Songt'an, and Waekwan in October 1968, and Waekwan in January 1969, some of which covered the front page of newspapers (Chosun Ilbo 20 February, 1967; 5 November, 1967; 28 February, 1968; 6 September, 1968; 12 January, 1969; 17 July, 1971; 4 April, 1972).

an actual increase, presumably caused by the strain of the Vietnam War, and/or increased public attention to U.S. crimes. After the ROK-U.S. Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA) became effective in 1967, in fact, the Korean media obviously paid much more attention to *kijich'on* crimes against "wianbu (comfort women)." Ironically, though, the media coverage of U.S. soldiers' violence against prostitutes, with few exceptions, virtually disappeared from 1973 until the early 1990s, as discussed in chapter 5.

In a similar manner, the drug issue became problematized. <sup>156</sup> In April 1970, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs raided several *kijich'ons*, including P'yŏngt'aek, P'aju, Pup'yŏng, Inch'ŏn, and Osan, and conducted a "special inspection" with regard to drugs and arrested fifteen narcotics criminals (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u>, 16 April, 1970; 17 April, 1970). From 1967, the number of prosecutions related to U.S. drug crimes had dramatically increased, from just 100 in 1967 to 635 in 1969, resulting in an annual growth of 129 percent (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u>, 6 April, 1970). In the days and weeks after October *Yushin* was proclaimed, one of the first implementations of the martial law was a government crackdown on illegal drugs, and, subsequently, the issue of drugs in *kijich'on* became abruptly and intensively highlighted (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u>, October 29, 1972; November 3, 1972; December 10, 1972; January 3, 1973; February 21, 1974; November 30, 1976).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> According to Courtwright (1997), a large increase in nonmedical opium addiction began in the late 1960s. The number of heroine addicts went from roughly 100,000 in 1967 to perhaps as many as half a million in 1975 (239). The Vietnam War supposedly affected the increase. Particularly toward the end of the "conflict," according to Yom (2004), the psychological disillusionment of the military experience, exacerbated by lagging support from civilian sectors, encouraged pessimism and fatalism among the rank-and-file, which resulted in "an increased use of sex and narcotics" (68). The rapid increase of heroin addiction among Vietnam veterans alarmed Richard Nixon and led to his declaration of "war on drugs" in 1971. Nonetheless, the Nixon administration's drug war was not blatantly punitive, as its predecessor had been and its successor would be. It stressed rehabilitation and treatment, including methadone maintenance (241).

I argue that, through the strategic vacillation between highlighting and ignoring *kijich'on* violence, the Korean government delivered contradictory messages to the U.S. and to Koreans, respectively. As far as the United States was concerned, the Korean government argued that "U.S. crimes are problematic, but the Korean government can be tolerable and wink at them once soldiers continue to station in South Korea," while to the Korean people, "the violent and dangerous areas [camptowns] should be controlled, detached from ordinary Koreans to protect them by the government, this led to social cleansing, "which turned out to be successful." As such, the Korean government successfully ghettoized *kijich'on* as "buffering zones or walls blocking Americans from entering Korean society and blocking normal Koreans from interacting with Americans" (Moon K. 1997, 178), and laid the "problems" of *kijich'on* at the U.S. door.

4.4.4. Yearning for Foreign Currency: *Kijich'on* as an Integral Part of Tourism

As discussed above, in the 1960s, the Korean government learned that women's sexual services were a significant source of foreign currency. With systematic institutions such as special districts and the Tourism Promotion Law, Korea could witnessed the rapid growth of a tourist industry, moving from "the emerging 1960s" toward "the leaping 1970s" (KCWU 1984, 9), which included revenue from camptown prostitution.

Because tourism in South Korea generated a significant proportion of Korea's total foreign exchange income (Kim E. 1987, 129), the Korean government began to

aggressively mobilize women as "raw materials" for national economic growth, <sup>157</sup> which led to revision of the Tourism Promotion Law in 1971 and revival of 119 special districts. <sup>158</sup> To ensure a stable resource of foreign currency, camptown prostitution was integrated as international sex tourism. <sup>159</sup> Women in camptowns came to be hailed not only as "personal ambassadors" but also as "patriots" "earning foreign exchange" for the nation's sake (Moon K. 1997, 102). For more profits, they needed to be taught how to work and behave properly toward American GIs. Educational lectures to the women irregularly conducted during the 1950s and 60s became regular occurrences, and during every Etiquette and Good Conduct Lecture, they heard the similar opening remarks: "all of you, who cater to the U.S. soldiers, are patriots. All of you are nationalists working to increase the foreign exchange earnings of our country" (ibid., 103). <sup>160</sup>

Concerned about losing "profits" after the Nixon Doctrine, the Korean government diversified the origin of resources of foreign currency. The *Yojŏng* (*kisaeng* house) department was established under the Korea International Tourism

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Similarly, tourism to Thailand brings in more foreign income than any other single source, and the major reason for the tourism is sex due to the government-promoted tourist industry from 1962 to 1980 in order to bring in foreign investment capital. During the Vietnam War when Thailand was a popular place for American troops' R & R breaks or what the troops called I & I (Intoxication and Intercourse), many GIs took a "minor wife." As the Vietnam War heated up in the late 1960s, more and more soldiers went to Bangkok for their R & R breaks, and the Thai economy experienced a large boost from an increased amount of United States currency entering its coffers. However, the money dried up when the war ended. Searching for Western dollars, the Thai government advertised its country as a place where foreign business could be conducted in an arena of exotic sexual options. This resulted in Thailand becoming "the brothel of Asia" (Brock and Thistlethwaite 1996, 57-59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Although special districts were temporarily eliminated in the name of social cleansing, when the legal dictatorship under the *Yushin* Constitution began in 1972, it was soon followed by the revival of 119 special districts dealing primarily with local customers and fifteen districts serving American soldiers in camptowns throughout the country (Pae 1989; Kim, 1990, 90, 96; KWDI 1989, 11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> The nature of economic development in South Korea during the 1960s and 1970s was "export-oriented," "state-led," and "dependent industrialization" (Shin 1991, 51). These three factors contributed to the growth of sex tourism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> This statement surprisingly paralleled the ideal image of the woman factory worker as an "industrial soldier," in the 1970s, which was a concept also developed by the government to promote the spirit of sacrifice for the good of the nation (Kim S. 1997, 5).

Corporation (KITC) to handle practical business regarding kisaeng tourism and vojong tourism (Pak J. 1994, 117). Kisaeng tourism especially targeted Japanese tourists. Since 1965 when the relationship between Korea and Japan was normalized, <sup>161</sup> in fact, the majority of tourists to South Korea have been Japanese, composing 60-70 percent of the entire number of foreign tourists (Kim H. 1987, 129; KCWU 1984, 9-11). As relations between Tokyo and Taipei were strained by the normalization of relations between Japan and the Peoples Republic of China in 1972, and the Japan Travel Bureau stopped soliciting for tours to Taiwan, the profits to Korean tourism guickly increased (Kim E. 1987, 132). In 1977, the amount of tourist profits was about \$3.7 billion, which was equivalent to one half of total national profits from exports. If unofficial tourism profits were taken into account, the real figure was approximately equivalent to the net income from exports (KCWU 1984, 56-57). 162 Given the lack of a tourist infrastructure (e.g., the insufficient hotel facilities, lack of service, and scarcity of tourist resources), the rapid growth was implicitly and explicitly based upon women's sexual services, euphemistically called "kisaeng tourism" (KCWU 1984, 7).

The Korean government ostensibly supported sex tourism, offering government-issued identification cards to *kisaeng*, since their work was an integral part of the tourism industry. The major work of the *Yojŏng* Department was

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Since the Korea's independence from Japanese colonial occupation in 1945, Korea had has no official relation with Japan both politically and economically. But through ratification of the Korea-Japan Agreement in 1965, the Korean government pursued economic development while burying the colonial past.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> In 1977, Korea's exports were around \$100 billion, but the net foreign income (or national profits from exports) was around 8 billion dollars (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> Kim (1987) argues that South Korean enterprises received a share of the revenues, since Korean prostitutes paid commissions to *kisaeng* houses, hotels, travel agencies, and procurers. Reportedly between half and eighty percent of their earnings were paid to the hotel, travel agency, or herb shop

registration of kisaeng, issuance of the identification card, and instruction in etiquette (Pak J. 1994, 117). Consequently, the number of kisaeng increased sharply, and registered kisaeng rose to about 10,000 in 1973 (Yi H. 1992, 85). "Kisaeng parties" became the most "impressive" and notorious aspect of Korea to Japanese tourists (KCWU 1984, 12). Min Gwan-Shik head of the Ministry of Culture and Education, in his visit to Japan in April 1973, praised Korean women for earning much-needed foreign currency through their work, calling kisaeng and hostesses "patriots" who devoted their bodies day and night "for the sake of nation" (Yi H. 1992, 89). 164 Kisaeng tourism and the minister's remark sparked women's furious resistance and led to several protests. In 1973, the Korean Church Women United (KCWU) organized protests against Japanese sex tourism and presented the issue at the first Japan-Korea Church Conference held in Seoul (Kim H. 1987, 142), at which they issued a "Statement Responding to the Tourism Policy" to the President Park Chung Hee and the Minister of Health and Social Welfare (KCWU 1984, 55). In December 1973, several demonstrations at Ewha Womans University and other universities demanded that the government change its policy, and Ewha students staged a protest at Kimpo Airport near Seoul, the only international airport in South Korea, against "sex tourism" (ibid.). Despite several limitation (discussed in the following chapter),

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that summoned or introduced them, and tips were given to hotel boys who procured customers for them (133).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> It is evident in the prerequisite lecture for women. To get the "kisaeng ID card," women were required to attend a KITC-sponsored "orientation program." The program consisted of lectures about "how valuable the foreign exchange women earn was to our economic development" and "how postwar Japanese women contributed to their nation's reconstruction by earning dollars through prostitution," as well as on "anti-communism" (Shin 1991, 64). And lecturers emphasized that "you girls must take pride in your devotion to your country, since your carnal conversation with foreign tourists is neither prostituting yourself nor the nation, but is an expression of your heroic patriotism (KCWU 1984; Shin 1991, 64).

the protests were significant in that progressive women gathered *en masse* to rally against the exploitation of women's bodies to serve national interests.

# 4. 5. Women in Military Prostitution: A Comparative Analysis

4.5.1. Military Prostitutes in the 1950s and 1960s: Autonomy and Spirit of Resistance

As military prostitution began to be consolidated in specific areas and systematically organized, women in camptowns became increasingly subject to collective control, losing autonomy and separated from ordinary residential areas. Yet, they still enjoyed relative freedom compared to those who came after them in the 1970s (Moon K 1997, 51). There were three characteristics noteworthy about the camptown prostitution in the 1950s and the 1960s in comparison with the later period under Park Chung Hee's rule. First of all, large numbers of prostitutes were working outside the perimeter of official control and worked individually without pimps (Chosun Ilbo 8 November, 1957; 9 August 1964). As mentioned above, from the late 1950s on, while authorities made efforts to concentrate prostitutes in specific districts catering to American and Korean soldiers for effective control over them, it took more time and better organized political power to achieve such objectives. It was not until 1962 that camptown prostitution became better organized and developed into a distinct form of its own under the military regime of Park Chung Hee. Moreover, since yanggongju (Western princess) had "access" to highly-valued American-made products, currency, and a wide variety of tax-free goods from post exchanges, they had distinct advantages in the poverty-stricken postwar decade (Sin 1987, 250). According to

statistical data, a majority of prostitutes who, during the 1950s (between 55 and 65 percent), catered to American soldiers constituted the strata of relatively flamboyant customers with affluent lifestyles and monthly incomes (Yi I. 2004a, 135-37; Chŏng 1967, 77).<sup>165</sup>

In addition, even those women working for pimps in camptowns enjoyed relatively more autonomy during the 1950s and early 1960s than their counterparts in the period of the late 1960s and 1970s. Military prostitutes organized and ran selfsupport groups (jach'iheo) for their rights, and waged protests against exploitative employers or clients. The self-support groups, Mugungwhahoe, Chinmokhoe, K'llobŏhoe, Ssas'akhoe, and Paekhaphoe, had existed before the 1960s (Chosun Ilbo 27 June, 1962; 15 August, 1962), and *Mintleheo*, in Tongduch'ŏn, was established in 1961 with several local branches for the sake of prostitute "human rights" and "protection" (Kim J. 1980, 284). These prostitute organizations were not always independent from the influence of the police and pimps, because most of them were originally established for the purpose of easier control over prostitutes by the government and closely linked to the police (Yi I. 2004a, 244; 2004c, 124-25). For example, *Paekhaphoe* was founded by the Korean police during the Korean War for the purpose of creating "a network to properly guide comfort women" (Yi I. 2004c, 139-41). It was in the auditorium in a police office where 670 comfort women

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<sup>\$50</sup> monthly (Chosun Ilbo 27 June, 1962). According to Cumings' observation (1997), "Every single American, from GI to ambassador, possessed more than virtually any Korean [in the 1950s]. Americans of modest income could amass fortunes just by trading cigarette cartons for Koryo celadon vases or Yi dynasty mahogany chests. Koreans therefore attached themselves to Americans by any means necessary, hoping against hope to get to America—uniformly conceived as a country where the streets were paved with gold, a fabulous PX in the sky. This is by no means an exaggeration, since the American post exchanges were the main supply line for the Korean black market and since the American military commander controlled the entire U.S. aid program from 1951 to 1959" (304).

gathered to organize the Military Prostitute Council in June 26, 1962. Choi Yukyung, who was elected the first president of the council, had been a leading member of *Paekhaphoe* and *Mugungwhahoe* (Chosun Ilbo 27 June, 1962; 15 August, 1962).

Nonetheless, according to former prostitute, Kim Yŏn-Ja, comfort women councils provided women with collective power for negotiating with pimps, their U.S. soldier clients, or the government (Interview in December, 2005) and played a key role for "helping themselves out" on a daily base (Chosun Ilbo 27 June, 1962; 15 August, 1962). During the summer of 1960, for example, some fifty "Western princesses" working in the so-called Texas village in Pusan protested against their exploitative employer who treated them like "slaves." Agitating collectively, Western princesses spread thousands of flyers conveying their message about equality among human beings and reached out to other prostitutes in nearby brothels in wanwol-dong and t'aepy'ŏng-dong (Chosun Ilbo 19 July, 1960). In Pup'yŏng, some 150 "comfort women dealing with American troops" protested against the strict restriction on their access to enlisted men's clubs and demanded the improvement of their treatment by the U.S. military (Chosun Ilbo 23 August, 1960). A "Comfort Women's demonstration" in 1965 serves as another example of these women's collective power. When a military prostitute committed suicide (allegedly after having been abandoned by her American lover), her "300 colleagues," bearing the bier of the dead, advanced into the Camp Carole to ask for an "apology" (Chosun Ilbo 13 February, 1965).

Cohabitation of prostitutes with American soldiers, as if they were legally married, was another significant experience in kijich'on. 166 To soldiers, this type of exclusive sexual relationship with "polite, compliant, young and exotic Korean women" not only relieved the stress of being in a "combat zone," but also provided a chance to reside outside camps with additional family allowance (Mal Magazine 1988 (26), 109). To prostitutes, cohabitation meant a relief from stressful daily dealings with clients and pimps and different treatment. Camptown prostitutes generally stopped working in bars and clubs and maintained monogamous relationships with their partners who gave them monthly living expenses like husbands (Ahn 2001, 165; Chosun Ilbo 27 June, 1962). 167 The women who served "one American husband" were called "yangbuin" (Western madam) instead of "yanggalbo" (Western whore) (Chosun Ilbo 27 June, 1962; 15 August, 1962). More importantly, such exclusive relationship opened up the possibility of real marriage and immigration to the U.S as military spouses. It was the only way to get to America for women without any hope for a future in their community and country (Yuh 2002, 61), <sup>168</sup> even though most cohabiting couples separated after a break-up or could not reach legal marriage. A double suicide that occurred in December 1963 warns us about the danger of overgeneralizing the cohabitation of camptown prostitutes with U.S. soldiers as an episode full of illusions and deceits. In a cold winter, the bodies of an American

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> In 1962, approximately 200 women out of 1000 military prostitutes in the Yongsan area cohabited with American soldiers as "married couples" (<u>Chosun Ilbo</u> 27 June, 1962).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> In December 1960, a group of "Western princesses" physically assaulted a Korean woman who was working in a convenient store in a camptown because she slept with an American soldier with whom their coworker was cohabiting (Chosun Ilbo 28 December, 1960). This type of incident connotes the conventional rule of monogamous relations among cohabiting couples.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> To many Korean women at that time, the soldiers who could provide highly valued goods were attractive as potential mates, and even more attractive as they did not care about the women's backgrounds (Shin 1987, 250).

soldier and a Korean prostitute were found dead, and the ensuing investigation revealed that the two lovers felt they had no other choice than to commit suicide when they learned that they could not get married due to the soldier's American wife's denial of divorce (Chosun Ilbo 3 December, 1963).

4.5.2. *Kijich'on* Women in the 1970s: Harsh Control, Losing Autonomy and Hope

Compared to their counterparts in the 1950s and 1960s, military prostitutes in the 1970s began losing autonomy partly because of increased authoritarian control that constituted the Camptown Purification Movement or so-called "Clean-up Campaign." Called for patriotic service through selling sex, women became subject to strong government control along with strictly enforced weekly VD examinations and indoctrination in intensive education regarding "good conduct" and proper "etiquette" as discussed above.

In accordance with the intensified control, all women working in clubs were required to take a VD test every week (every month in the 1960s) and carry a VD identification card. Clubs were put off limits (usually for seven to ten days) if three or four prostitutes were found with invalid VD cards in one month (Moon K. 1997, 144). Any Korean woman with a GI was required to carry a VD identification card unless she was married and had a dependent's card. If she was still working in a club after marriage, she had to have the VD identification card issued by a government-supported VD clinic (Kim Y. 2005, 194-95). Moreover, twice a month, base personnel, Korean authorities, and the Civilian Military Operations (GMO) went on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> A chest X-ray and blood test every six months and an AIDS blood test every three months were added in the 1980s.

VD spot checks. They stopped women on the street to check their VD identification cards (Sturdevant and Stoltzfus 1992, 176). <sup>170</sup> If a woman did not have the card with her at the spot, she was taken to the police office and given a summary conviction. If she could not afford to pay the fine, she was imprisoned for five days (Kim Y. 2005, 195).

The label of "personal ambassador" for national security (Moon K. 1997, 153) could not eliminate or enhance their pariah-like status. Rather, psychological isolation and physical separation from residential areas became more intensified. In addition, institution of the U.S, "volunteer army system" instituted in 1974 changed significantly the racial and socioeconomic characteristics of military personnel (Sin 1987, 270). Bok (1994) observed that "American service men looked less militant in loose costumes. They were spending less money and enjoying more drugs instead of alcohols…and many of them were blacks…there were few college-graduated soldiers" (221-22). For women, such changes meant a worsening of the environments of the *kijich'on*: Less income and more exposure to violence.

However, many of them refused to become hopeless victims. Actively waging protests, *kijich'on* prostitutes voiced their grievances against abusive pimps or U.S. clients. Protests in May 1971 against GI's efforts to cut their rates for sex occurred in P'yŏngt'aek, exemplifying how military prostitutes could stage demonstrations on behalf of their interest (Kim Y. 2005, 129). When *kijich'on* women felt their basic human rights were threatened or violated, they were wiling to take action. For example, "about two hundred prostitutes carrying sticks demonstrated outside [Camp

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 $<sup>^{170}</sup>$  The GMO were along because soldiers sometimes got angry for the woman they were with when she got stopped (ibid.).

Ames] demanding immediate arrest" of a GI alleged to have murdered a *kijich'on* prostitute on July 16, 1971 (Moon K. 1998, 159). Unlike the presumption that educational ignorance was responsible for becoming comfort women, moreover, many women graduated from middle school or high school. According to a survey conducted in Tongduch'ŏn in 1975, about 30 percent (1077 out of 3,008) of registered camptown prostitutes had a middle-school level of education (Kim J. 1980, 285).

One of the most noteworthy aspects of *kijich'on* in the 1970s was the rapid growth of interracial marriage between American GIs and Korean prostitutes. Ms. Hey who ran the New York City-based Rainbow Center for former prostitutes, testified that "over 100,000 marriages between American men and Korean women, many but by no means all of whom were former prostitutes, have taken place since 1950 (Hey 1999, 2). However, it was not until the enactment of the Act of April 7, 1970,<sup>171</sup> that the total number of Korean women admitted to the U.S. as wives or spouses-to-be of U.S. citizens increased rapidly (Sin 1987, 251). A Korean journal estimated that one out of six *kijich'on* prostitutes managed to marry GIs in the 1970s, based upon the contemporary record of 3000 interracial marriages per year (Mal Magazine 1988 (26), 109). Similarly, Bartman (1989) indicates that there were

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Provisions of the act, first, were to create two new classes of nonimmigrant admission-fiance(e)s of U.S. citizens and intracompany transferees; second, modify the H1 temporary worker class of nonimmigrant admission (workers of distinguished merit and ability); and third, alter the provisions of the law regarding the two-year residence requirement, making it easier for nonimmigrants who have been in the United States as exchange visitors to adjust to a different nonimmigrant status or to permanent resident status (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, <a href="http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/shared/aboutus/statistics/LegisHist/533.htm">http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/shared/aboutus/statistics/LegisHist/533.htm</a>).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup>Gwyn Kirk asserted, similarly, that roughly 3,000 marriages take place each year between Korean women and G.I.s (Kirk 1995, 13).

25,000 marriages of soldiers to Koreans in the decade between 1970 and 1980 (2). <sup>173</sup> In fact, in 1976, 138 women in Tongduch'ŏn married American soldiers and, as a result, were able to leave *kijich'on* prostitution (Kim 1980, 285).

The considerable number of interracial marriages paradoxically shows Korea's ostracism of and oppressive environment against military prostitutes, who increasingly had no place to return to. One former prostitute, who married an American soldier in the 1970s, testified that "because I had been a yanggongju in the past, I had no hope for a future in Korea. So I agreed to marry him." Even though the African American soldier she married was notorious as a philanderer and a drinker, and it was a loveless marriage from the start, she had felt she had no choice but to marry him (Ms. Kim's testimony quoted in Yuh 2002, 61). Alarmed by such a dramatic increase in marriage rates, James Goldman, senior special agent with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, asked with regard to the thousands of Korean prostitutes who entered the nation annually via military marriages, "Why are so many GIs marrying whores? Doesn't the Army know about this?" He was convinced that "there have to be Korean nationals who are soliciting GIs to marry prostitutes" (Bartman 1989, 2). Even though three-quarters of marriages between Korean women and U.S. servicemen end in divorce, and 70 percent of such marriages are abusive, and thus many women ended up working as prostitutes in U.S. massage

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> Shin (1987) argued that "during the 30 year period 1951-1980, a total of 45,551 Korean women had been admitted to the U.S. as wives of U.S. citizens. Additionally, 8,178 Koreans were admitted between 1971 and 1980 as spouses of U.S. citizens on the basis of the Act of April 7, 1970. The total number of Korean women admitted to U.S. as wives or spouses-to-be of U.S. citizens prior to 1981 is then 53,629" (251).

parlors (Hey 1999, 2), women in *kijich'on* took risks to realize their only hope to leave *kijich'on*. <sup>174</sup>

#### Conclusion

Due to shifts in the national and international atmosphere, camptown prostitution experienced several ebbs and flows in the decades after the Korean War. As national anxiety about security, economic development, and "social chaos" increasingly grew, so did the strong control over camptown prostitution. The government's strategic rhetoric decrying prostitution thinly veiled its underlying objectives to mobilize women's bodies in order to earn foreign currency in the name of nation, regardless of women's material living conditions. Such government perception of women's sexual services in conjunction with strong motivation of national development overshadowed prostitution, in particular, and the service industry, in general, for decades to come. Moreover, the *kijich'on* prostitution that had contributed to national development during and immediately after the Korean War began, ironically, to lose its significance due to the development of the nation-state and proliferation and diversification of the sex industry.

As military prostitution was consolidated in specific geographical areas separated from ordinary residential areas and systematically organized as an integral part of national security and economic growth, women in camptowns became increasingly subject to collective control, losing autonomy. Yet, they were neither

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 $<sup>^{174}</sup>$  Misook testifies that approximately 90 percent of women in massage parlors in New York were once married to American servicemen (ibid.)

helpless victims nor ignorant poor women. They were capable of agency, even when this involved taking considerable risks. Moreover, they proved that on numerous occasions they could organize collective resistance. Nor were they all uneducated; a significant number of them had a high level of education. Developing diverse survival skills, including leading protests against discriminatory treatment, organizing self-reliance groups, and planning escape from the oppressive community and nation, women in camptowns could carve out spaces for themselves.

Chapter 5: The *Kijich'on* Movement and Gendered Nationalism: Emergence, Conflict, and Negotiation (the 1980s-1990s)

## Introduction

The 1980s began with another military regime right after the explosive demise of Park's authoritarian regime. Korea's democratization movement was at its peak in the mid-1980s in confrontation with the military regime and eventually brought it down. Within the broader social movement frame of "minju" politics (i.e., people-centered democracy), women activists generally remained marginalized (Jones 2003, 108). However, some Christian women and student movement activists came together at this time to address the *kijich'on* issue and gradually began to prioritize women's issues with regard to U.S. military camptowns. This chapter examines the trajectory of the *kijich' on* movement during the democratic transition and consolidation, discussing its emergence, growth, and transformation. Exploring how the organizations of kijich'on movement negotiated with the changing political environment, I focus on the tensions between nation and gender, as well as Korean nationalism and feminism, particularly around the symbolic metaphor of *yanggongju* (Western princess). Changes in women's conditions in *kijich'on* affected by the shifting Korean polity will be discussed as well.

#### 5.1. The New Authoritarian Regime and its Policy on Prostitution

After Park's assassination in October 1979, Major General Chun Doo Hwan initiated a coup to take command of the Korean military and eventually controlled the entire country (Cumings 1997, 375-77). Following the violent suppression of the Kwangju Uprising in May 1980 and the subsequent consolidation of his power, Chun carried out massive campaigns to "cleanse" (*chŏnghwa*) the entire society (Kim S. 2000, 78). These campaigns were originally designed to terrorize and effectively silence civil society as a whole. Numerous college students and labor activists were categorized as "hooligans and gangsters" and sent to military courts, education camps, or labor camps, in the name of "purge" campaigns (ibid., 78-79).

Prostitutes were no exception. The initial effort of the government in the 1950s and 60s to send prostitutes back to their homes was displaced by a policy of increased medical treatment in the 1970s-1980s, as discussed earlier, when thousand of women were sent to vocational training centers (KWDI 1985, 454; quoted in Shin 1991, 61). Approximately 6,700 women were sent to the centers in 1981 in the name of "provision of employment guidance" (MHSA 1987, 143). The vocational centers were originally established for the purpose of "rehabilitation," "protection," and "guidance" of prostitutes under the Prostitution Prevention Law enacted in 1961. In reality, however, the centers operated as a work "camps," which increasingly became oppressive "prisons" under the Chun regime (Shin 1991, 61-62). Once caught, prostitutes were forced into the centers, whereas male customers were freed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> On May 18, 1980, many people including students, religious organizations, youth groups, labor and peasant unions took to Kwangju's streets to launch massive pro-democracy demonstrations, demanding the repeal of martial law. After a series of attempts by the demonstrators to negotiate a truce with the army failed, regular troops invaded the city on May 27 and 174 people died and 389 were injured according to the official account (ibid., 67). Regarding additional information of the Kwangju massacre, see Cumings as well (1997, 377-82).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> The number decreased to 3,800 in 1986 (ibid.) when the mission, "cleanse the society" (*Ssahoe Chŏnghwa*), became meaningless.

after being fined. Once housed, women endured impractical job trainings, arbitrary extension of the detention period, military-style drills and forced labor, coerced religious services, and numerous violations of human rights including actual physical violence (Wŏn 1997, 78). The notorious reputation of the vocational centers resulted in widespread anxiety among prostitutes (Shin 1991, 62). Because being "housed" was especially frightening, prostitutes bribed police officers and other government officials in order not to be caught. And once confined, they bribed officials of the centers so as not to be severely harassed (Wŏn 1997, 80).

Despite these measures, though, the government policy on prostitution during this period can realistically be characterized as "supporting the domestic sex industry and international tourism," rather than suppressing prostitution. Beginning in the 1980s, Chun's military regime enacted the so-called 3S (Screen, Sports, and Sex) policy in order to minimize public anger and to divert the spirit of resistance against the military dictatorship into cultural consumerism (Choi 1996; KWDI 1998, 45). The new policy coincided with measures to promote tourism, which was intended to be a major source of foreign currency. The Korea International Tourism Corporation, which was established by Park's regime right after its coup, changed into the Korea National Tourism Corporation (KNTC) in 1984 (KCWU 1988, 38). Under the control of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, it envisioned hosting three million foreign tourists and earning \$1.8 billion in profits (Yi H. 1992, 385). Such an ambitious plan, for which the catch phrase was "Era of Mass Tourism," could not be realized without a healthy, prosperous sex industry. One of the initial plans was to establish special

tourist zones in Cheju Island in 1982 (KNTO 2006; KCWU 1987, 29).<sup>177</sup> It included collective as well as organized construction of a visa-free zone, particularly targeting Japanese tourists, as the Park regime had done in Kyungju city under the *Yushin* dictatorship in 1972.<sup>178</sup> In addition, a large scale "Korea *Yojŏng* (*kisaeng* house) Construction Plan" was proposed to the president under the name of "national tourism (*kungmin kwanggwang*)" whose underlying idea was "to draw foreign tourists" (KCWU 1988, 15; 1987, 29).<sup>179</sup>

Consequently, Japanese *kisaeng* tourism rapidly spread in high-class *yojŏng* and tourist hotels in the mid-1980s (KCWU 1984, 7-14). The meager number of 11,108 foreign tourists in 1961 increased to more than one million in 1978 and, by 1988, when South Korea hosted the Olympic Summer Games, the total number of foreign tourists reached 2.34 million. The number of hotels also increased from 42 in 1967, to 130 in 1978, and to 276 in 1988 to accommodate the increasing number of tourists (Shin 1991, 58). The expansion of the entertainment industry, of which prostitution was only one aspect, went hand in hand with economic development. In the early 1990s, after three decades of "successful" export-oriented economic development, foreign "trade" came to depend even more on sex tourism. By then, it is estimated over 1.2 million women were engaged in sexual services of various forms (ibid., 51), and many of these women were involved in even more systematically

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> The Korea National Tourism Corporation changed its name into the Korea National Tourism Organization in 1996 (KNTO http://www.knto.or.kr/gs/yh/gsyh\_av0.jsp).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> Due to the Korean government effort, Japanese tourists reached 76,000 out of the total number foreign tourists, 116,000 in 1986 (KCWU 1988, 40).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> The midnight curfew was abolished to boost the entertainment industry as well (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Cumings (1992) testifies that it seemed that Japanese men were competing with Americans for available Korean women (175).

organized prostitution, called "industrial forms of prostitution" rather than the traditional form involving brothels (KWDI 1998, 3-5).

As tourist-oriented prostitution developed, became increasingly diversified, from *yojŏng*, tourist motels, massage parlors, barbershops, room salons, and even to the public bathhouses (Castro 2003, 19; Pak 1994, 127), and began to earn greater profits than *kijich'on*, the Korean government diverted its attention from *kijich'on*, and *kijich'on* virtually disappeared in the media except when it was related to the issue of AIDS. <sup>181</sup> And when the Chun regime announced its decision to host the 1988 Olympic Summer Games just two years after hosting the Asian Games in 1986, news regarding negative aspects of *kijich'on* entirely disappeared in the press. <sup>182</sup> The media's scant attention to *kijich'on* was partly because of the government's censorship of news (to silence anti-Americanism) after its grip over the mass media became tightened. <sup>183</sup>

Compare this to the Korean government's attitude regarding *kijich'on* prostitution during the heydays of the 1960s and 1970s. The majority of *kijich'on* prostitutes then were treated relatively well compared with those in ordinary brothels. They were heralded as "heroes" by the government not only because they earned precious foreign currency and boosted the South Korean economy but also because they were the "pedestal" of national security for serving the U.S. military allies. The

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When the first HIV-positive patient died in 1987, *kijich'on* was again highlighted as the "origin of disease" (Chosun Ilbo 13 February, 1987).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> In an interview in August 2005, the director of Durebang, Yu Young Rim, explained the government effort "not to leaking out" about kijich' on to international society with ignorance about *kijich' on* women's human rights.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> The Chun regime forced newspaper and broadcasting companies to be singled out. In July 1980, it purged over seven hundred journalists who were "deficient in anticommunism" and merged news agencies, newspapers, and periodicals for effective control (Kim S. 2000, 78; Moon 2005, 100).

irony is that the higher Korea's international status became, the more the public ignorance of *kijich'on* women intensified.

## 5.2. Emergence of the Women's Movement against Kijich'on Prostitution

# 5.2.1. Aspirations of Democratization and Gendered Movements

According to Whittier (1995), "[S]ocial movements are a fundamentally collective phenomenon. Understanding them requires us to examine commitment, identity, and generation at the collective level: culture, interaction, daily life, and collective identity" (16). Whittier conceptualizes "generational politics" and "collective identity" as "located in action and interaction" rather than "in individual selfconceptions, attitudes, or beliefs. The hallmarks of generational difference, then, are interwoven into everyday life and the ways that individuals interact with each other and structure organizations" (16-17). In this sense, the women's movement in South Korea, particularly in the 1980s, can be conceptualized as the generational politics of those who shared a specific collective identity that emerged from women's diverse involvement in democratic struggles against military dictatorship at a specific historical moment. Women's common experiences in waging street demonstrations and protests, organizing conscious-raising groups, and building coalitions among individuals, groups, and/or active members of political parties shaped their collective identity differently from those feminists most active in the 1970s or in the 1990s. In

other words, such experiences of collective action on a daily basis constituted the feminist activists' identities not just as progressive activists, but as women.<sup>184</sup>

In South Korea, the decade between 1980 and 1989 was fraught with resistant aspiration against military dictatorship, desire for democratization, and massive popular protests accompanied by recurrent clashes between protesters and riot police, of which the June Uprising of 1987 is exemplary. 185 It has been historically recorded as an "important turning point in Korea's democratization" driven by "dynamic expansion, revitalization, and eventual outburst of civil society" (Choi 2000, 24). However, the militant actions of organizations caused by the violent confrontation between civil society and the state under the political condition of military authoritarian rule discouraged women's access to active participation in civil activism. Women activists were frustrated by a pervasive hegemonic gender ideology among male activists, who reiterated hierarchical power relationship within organizations of the progressive social movement (Moon S. 2002, 482-83). Women who questioned the relations between men and women inside the democratic movement were labeled insider-traitors and/or punished through "marginalization," "exclusion," and/or "expulsion" (Soh 2001, 21). Under the name of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> For further discussion about the Korean women's movement in the 1980s, please refer to Chai (1997), Kim Y. (2000), and Moon S. (2002).

When President Chun handpicked general Roh Tae-woo as his successor in April 1987, students, religious groups, labor unions, and opposition politicians waged a series of massive demonstrations lasting through May and June 1987, demanding a direct electoral system. This turned out to be successful in obtaining a concession from the regime for a direct presidential election, which eventually caused the breakdown of the military dictatorship. This is the citizen-initiated "Great Struggle for Democratization," which is generally called the "June Uprising of 1989" (For further discussion about the June Uprising, please refer to Choi 2000; Kim S., 1998; Lim 2000; Moon S. 2002). It is significant that the June Uprising, initiated by the burgeoning of civil society that emerged from the resistance actions of the 1960s and 1970s, enabled a grand democratic alliance among diverse groups that raised issues of domestic democratization as well as reunification. Therefore, 1987 is remembered by Koreans as an "important turning point in Korea's democratization process" (Choi 2000, 27; Kim S. 1998, 223).

"democratization," "reunification," "total transformation," and/or "broader sense of progress," women's issues were laid aside and women's existence was regarded as secondary or trivial (Yi H. 2001, 13-14). It is not surprising, given the history of nationalist movements worldwide, to find that "women who have called for more genuine equality between two sexes—in the movement, in the home—have been told that now is not the time, the nation is too fragile, the enemy is too near" (Enloe 1990, 62). And yet, their experiences of these kinds of prejudice actually enabled women to recognize androcentrism deeply embedded within the progressive movement and eventually to raise questions about the politics of gender (Yi H. 2001, 9).

In the context of this revolutionary period, two different groups of women, both active in resistance movement, came together to form a *kijich'on* movement. The first group was involved with Christian women's organizations; the second was involved with the students' democratic movement.

# 5.2.2. Emergence of the *Kijich'on* Movement

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>186</sup> Under Chun's military regime, when people's desire for democratization was at its peak, "women sought to achieve their own rights. In this regard, issues of *kijich'on* and *chongsindae* became publicized in the light of women's rights" (Durebang 2001, 5).

<sup>187</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, progressive Christian women's groups helped generate a more explicit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>187</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, progressive Christian women's groups helped generate a more explicit focus on gender inequalities and served as an important breeding ground for future feminist activists (Jones 2003, 109). The Korean Church Women United (Hankuk-kyohoe-yŏsŏng-yŏnhaphoe) was one of the core organizations for progressive women at the time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>188</sup> Korea's civil society consisted of various groups of people including students and intellectuals, religious groupings, labor unions, *chaeya* groups (progressive people outside political parties), and politicians. For further discussion about Korea's civil society, see Choi 2000; Kim S. 1998; Kim H. 2000). Similarly, Christian women, intellectuals including college students, and labor workers were the main components of organizations in the women's movements. In particular, Christian women's groups have played major roles in the labor movement, the anti-war/peace movement, the anti-prostitution movement, and the reunification movement, as well as raising issues regarding comfort women (Chŏng 1999, 314). As discussed in the previous chapter, *kisaeng* tourism was first challenged by these Christian women's groups.

Durebang (My Sister's Place), founded in 1986 in Ŭijŏngbu City (near Camp Stanley Army Base) when the turmoil of the democratization movement was at its peak in South Korea, was the first women's organization to advocate expressly on behalf of *kijich'on* women (Durebang 2001, 4). Another representative organization, Saeumto (Sprouting Land), was founded in 1996 in Tongduch'ŏn city (adjoining Camp Casey) in the midst of the burgeoning of feminist aspiration. <sup>189</sup>

Durebang started as an outreach project of the Korean Presbyterian Church (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999, 13). The founder, Fay Moon (Moon Herim in Korean), the wife of a dissident activist in the Korean Democratization Movement, Reverend Moon Dong Hwan, had been a social worker with a chaplain of the U.S. military since 1973. With the financial support of U.S. Christian women (Moon Y. 1999, 214-24; Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999, 14), Moon determined to "do something" for kijich'on women to whom no one— not the U.S. military, not the Korean government, not even Korean activists—had ever listened (Moon Y. 1999, 215). She submitted a project proposal to the American Presbyterian Church in an attempt to solicit funds to establish a center or shelter for women who had been abandoned and alienated by/from Korean society (ibid., 215-16, 219). Yu Pong Rim, who had studied theology at a Korean seminary, was later asked by the Korean Church to join Durebang as part of her missionary work (Moon K. 1999, 316; Adler 2000, 29). Both women started their outreach work in U.S. camptowns and came to understand the lives of kijich'on prostitutes by talking with them in the VD clinics and trying to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>189</sup> The June Uprising of 1987 made the military regime turned over and led to important turning point in Korea's democratization process and burgeoning of civil society (Choi 2000, 27). Since then, the women's movement developed rapidly taking "autonomous" stance from the androcentric social movement arena (Kang 2004, 18).

befriend them on a casual basis (Moon K. 1999, 316). It helped in their negotiations with U.S. military authorities that Fay Moon spoke English, held U.S. citizenship, was familiarity with both U.S. and Korean cultures, and was dedicated to work with marginalized peoples. Durebang and Fay Moon successfully "opened up doors" to *kijich'on* women who had never before been treated as "human beings" (Moon Y. 1999, 214-45).

Significantly, Durebang's mission was not to remove prostitutes from *kijich'on* but to help them live "genuine human lives," "overcome their alienation from Korean society," "successfully manage an the international/bicultural relationship," and "stand on their own two feet" (Durebang Newsletter Spring (1), 1988; Fall (2), 1988; Fall (4), 1989). According to the organization's own promotional materials, the "purpose of My Sister's Place" is to provide not only "a climate for spiritual [Christian] community building among Korean women married to, engaged to, living with or serving American GIs," but also "opportunities for them to rediscover their hidden abilities and talents" (Durebang English Newsletter Spring (3), 1989). Organizational activism was thus focused on interaction [among *kijich'on* women], education, and counseling to encourage those in bicultural relationships "to retain an appreciation for their Korean culture and self worth" (ibid.). The statement reflects Fay Moon's perspective on *kijich'on* women and the general direction of the movement.

Fay Moon believed that the hardships of *kijich'on* women were caused by the unequal relationship between the U.S. and Korea, as evidenced in the following statement: "I knew the military and soldiers' thinking toward Korean culture and

people. They did not respect Korean culture. Unlike soldiers in Germany, who tried to learn language and culture, those in Korea never tried to learn the Korean language and about Korean culture. They looked down on Korea, Korean culture and people" (interview with Fay Moon in May 2005). Although she could not repair the asymmetrical relationship between the two nations, Fay Moon longed for kijich'on women to acquire the means to manage these unequal relationships between two individuals, a kijich'on prostitute and GI. 190 Because, for her, kijich'on women's daily survival was of primary importance (Durebang Newsletter Fall (4), 1989), <sup>191</sup> Durebang focused its activism on providing them with such survival skills as English (for conversation), basic knowledge about their health, information about American culture, how to prepare American food, and how to empower themselves through building companionship with other prostitutes (interview with Fay Moon in May 2005: Durebang Newsletter Spring (1), 1988: Fall (4), 1989). 192 Thus Durebang continuously sought to develop programs such as cooking classes, English classes, Bible studies, collective prayer meetings, group counseling, worship services, and childcare services in order to help women develop self-reliance (interview with Fay Moon in May 2005; Durebang Newsletter Spring (1), 1988; Fall (4), 1989; December (8), 1991).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> Fay Moon truly believed that "if they could learn English, they would get power to negotiate with GIs in daily lives" (Interview in May 2005).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> In the interview with me, Fay Moon said, "should we rescue them from prostitution? Where? They wanted to get married to U.S. soldiers and go to the U.S... there is no way for them to be integrated into Korean society and that is women's only hope..." (May 2005).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> In each newsletter, Durebang included information in its Health Section on pregnancy, contraception, and constipation and for childcaring (*Kŏn-gang kyossil*) and English conversation in a English Section (*Yŏng-ŏ hanmadi*) (Durebang Newsletter February (5), 1990; May (6), 1990; April (7), 1991; December (8), 1991).

It is also noteworthy that Durebang broke new ground by establishing a bakery as an alternative means of livelihood for former military prostitutes (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999, 14). The bakery program led to college students' attention to *kijich'on*, because student activists deeply involved in the democratization movement delivered and sold breads from the bakery to students on campus (interview with Fay Moon in May, 2005). In summer 1990, Durebang accepted the first volunteer activists composed of college students from Ewha Womans University and Korea Seminary (Hanshin University) (Durebang Newsletter April (7), 1991; Durebang 2001, 363). The volunteer work centered on supporting education and daycare for *kijich'on* women's children, facilitating the bakery program, and publicizing the various activities of Durebang (Durebang Newsletter April (4), 1991).

The students' volunteer work in *kijich'on* (*kihwal*) was waged as part of students' movement activism like volunteering to work for farmers (*nonghwal*), factory workers (*konghwal*), or poor people (*binhwal*) in order to raise consciousness about social justice (Chŏng 1999, 319-320). Kim Hyun Sun defines *kihwal* as "part of the student movement to recognize and resolve the problems pertaining to *kijich'on* including issues pertaining to women, children, and the regional community, which are caused by the unequal relationship between Korea and the U.S., the U.S. military, and the patriarchal practice of prostitution" (Proposal of *Kihwal* to College Students 1998; interview with Chŏn).

Introducing the reality of military prostitution to college female activists created a bridge between two different classes of women, breaking down college

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>193</sup> Since then, every summer, college student activists have participated in volunteer work (interview with Kim Hyun Sun in August 2005).

women's prejudice against military prostitutes (interview with Fay Moon in May 2005). More importantly, it led to societal awareness of military prostitution as well as recognition of the *kijich'on* movement, which, in turn, encouraged others to become activists and volunteers in the *kijich'on* movement (Adler 2000, 36; Chŏng 1999, 320). Most active staffs of Durebang and Saeumto, including Kim Hyun Sun, the first student activist of Durebang and current director of Saeumto, another representative organization of the *kijich'on* movement, were/are "from *kihwal*" (interview with Chŏn in December 2004; Chŏng 1999, 320). Ironically, however, the increasing integration of the student volunteers and the existing staff of Durebang turned into the beginning of fracture within the movement.

### 5.2.3. Rupture: Christianity vs. Nationalism

The leaders' Christian beliefs and obedience to the Church's authority at times functioned as a significant barrier for some activists and student volunteers. Even though Fay Moon regarded *kijich'on* prostitution as an issue concerning "the U.S. military, militarized masculinity, and the nation" (Durebang Newsletter Fall (2), 1988), the primary initiative of Durebang's activism was based upon "the Christian principle that all human beings are promised to live equally under the guardianship of God" (Durebang Newsletter, Fall (2) 1988). <sup>196</sup> On the contrary, for student volunteers

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>194</sup> Kihwal, rather, eventually contributed to burgeoning of the Korean Women's Movement against Prostitution (Chŏng 1999, 320).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> Chŏn is current director of the Tongduch'ŏn center (Saeumto has three centers in 2005). She became involved in the *kijich'on* movement led by her experience of kihwal in summer 1998 as other staffs in Saeumto.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>196</sup> This belief is evident in the following statement: "[F]or those in or coming from oppressive situations at home or the workplace, we provide opportunities for them to rediscover their hidden abilities and talents. Through dialoguing with American and Korean Church people on the unique problems of bicultural relationships, the American military presence overseas, and prostitution, we

and the majority of activists of the kijich on movement politicized by the 1980s democratic movement, the so-called "democratization generation" (minjuhwa-sedae), kijich'on was a symbol of U.S. occupation of the Korean peninsula, U.S. imperialism, and the division of the nation, and kijich'on women were "sacrificial lambs" of the suffering nation (E University student; H University student; quoted in Durebang Newsletter December (8), 1991; Chong H. 1999, 321, 349). Their approach to kijich'on as well as their motivation to participate in volunteer work in kijich'on was primarily driven by anti-Americanism (interview with Chon; Chong 1999, 321), <sup>197</sup> which spread throughout the whole country in the early 1990s, as discussed in the next section.

The idea somewhat paralleled that of Yu Pong Rim who was influenced by progressive theology (minjung-sinhak) at Hanshin Theology University, where there was a strong tradition of social participation. Yu conceptualized kijich'on women as "sacrificial lambs of the divided nation," calling them "contemporary comfort women" "suffering from the severe pain of the divided nation" (Yu 1989, 176-77; Durebang Newsletter December (8), 1991). With such rhetoric, she called for public attention to women in kijich'on, and ultimately wanted them to be included as part of the nation, "minjung" (Korean people). Her perception of kijich on linked student activists in kihwal and kijich'on women, which dissolved when she left Durebang in March 1992 to marry, right after Fay Moon returned to the U.S. in December 1991 (Durebang 2001, 363-64).

assist them in forming loving Christian responses to these difficult issues" (Durebang English Newsletter, Spring 1989).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>197</sup> As Chŏng (1999) indicates, student volunteers were not interested in the domestic sex industry and prostitution, because they were not about the nation. For them, volunteer work in kijich on was part of the anti-American movement (321).

After Yu's resignation, conflicts between/among staff members and grassroots activists surfaced. Even though offering physical and emotional aid to those in need seemed immediately relevant to the kijich'on movement (Moon K. 1999, 324), some activists did not want the movement to be guided by Christian concerns for women (Adler 2000, 31) but rather by women's concern for themselves (ibid., 62). The inspiration was driven and supported by the proliferation of autonomous women's associations in the context of the mid-1990s when the androcentric nature of suppressed civil society under authoritarian regimes was significantly modified, and Korean society acquired a new dimension in the process of democratization (Moon 2002, 483). 198 As the Korean women's movement emerged as an increasingly public presence during the post-transition period, many women activists began to realize the necessity of fighting for gender justice if true democracy was to be achieved (Jones 2003, 110), which enabled them to increase their focus on women's concerns such as sexual violence and harassment, domestic violence, lesbian rights, body politics, and prostitution (Kang 2004, 18).

Subsequently, Kim Hyun Sun, <sup>199</sup> an active staff member of Durebang at that time, founded another counseling/advocacy center named Saeumto in Tongduch'ŏn in 1996 when she recognized that it was very hard to reconcile "differences over organizational leadership styles and goals" (Moon K. 1999, 324). For her and several other feminist activists in Durebang, it seemed urgent and necessary to formulate an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> The Korean Women's Associations United (KWAU), the major umbrella organization of autonomous women's associations, was formed in 1987 and boasted a total of twenty-eight member organizations by 2000 (Moon S. 2002, 489).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>199</sup> Kim Hyun Sun was politicized by the student democratization movement and influenced by Anti-American aspiration and anti-imperialism in the 1980s, and later became interested in the *kijich'on* movement driven by *kihwal* (interview with Kim Hyun Sun in August 2005).

autonomous feminist organization of the kijich 'on movement, independent of "religion, capital, and politics" (Proposal of *Kihwal* to College Students 1998). Saeumto started a project where women sold fresh herb plants and hand-made items like potpourri and cards and paper from dried herbs and recycled milk cartons (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999, 13-14) and provided education as well as night-care for kijich'on women's children (Adler 2000, 34). The research on "actual conditions" of kijich'on women (ibid., 35) initiated by Saeumto was significant as a first attempt to officially record the material conditions of kijich'on women's lives, emphasizing women's "tragic stories to tell" (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999, 15-16). Because of Kim Hyun Sun' vigorous activism with other staff members in Saeumto (most of whom were actively engaged in the student movement), the issues of kijich'on women became the subjects of a broad-based national conversation. Their nationalist approach to military prostitution shed light on Korean feminist approaches to kijich'on, considering the complex relationship between nation-states, the military, and crimes against women. Thereafter, two different perspectives on military prostitution have been dominant in South Korea: Christian and Nationalist. For some, poor women should be saved in the name of God; for others, "sacrificial lambs" of U.S. imperialism and militarism must be rescued to recover national pride. Based on their belief that all women share fundamentally the same victimization based on their shared identities as women, kijich 'on women are rhetorically constructed as "helpless victims" of an immoral patriarchal society or as their "poor sisters" in the metahistorical struggle for Korean national sovereignty. For some, then, saving these

women from sin is key; for others, kicking out U.S. troops is the only real solution (Moon K. 1999, 324).

Yet, it is misleading to depict the strands two organizations took only in terms of absolutely dichotomous difference. They also share several commonalities. Since their inceptions, both Durebang and Saeumto have functioned as community centers for military prostitutes, providing education and counseling services and several rehabilitation programs for women as well as education and night-care for their children (Brochures of Durebang; Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999, 13). Also, both organizations pursued the vision of "making the invisible visible and the unheard heard" as one of the most significant aspects of their activism. With efforts to remove the cultural stigma attached to "Western princesses," the kijich on movement has successfully transformed the social perception of kijich'on prostitutes as a collective identity from pariah, dirty trash, yanggalbo (Western whore) and/or fallen woman into that of helpless victim, sacrificial lamb, and/or "poor sister (Yu 1988; Saeumto 1996; 1999; Durebang 1995; 2001). Their conceptualization of military prostitution as a slave system constructed by intertwined patriarchy, militarism, and imperialism has had a tremendous impact on the Korean public's conceptualization and understanding of kijich'on. That the Hansori, founded in 1987 as an umbrella organization of the anti-prostitution movement, has grown out of the work of two organizations is another considerable achievement of the *kijich'on* movement. <sup>200</sup> As

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> Along with them, Tabita House (Dabitaŭi Jip, located in Tongduch'ŏn City), Chamsarang Ssimtŏ (Shelter of Real Love, in Songt'an City), and House of Magdalena (in the Yongsan garrison area in Seoul) have functioned as shelters or counseling centers for both Korean and foreign military prostitutes under the umbrella of the Hansori. Several NGOs such as the Anyang Migrant Workers' Center, the Association for Foreign Workers' Human Rights, and the Sunflower-Counseling Center for Migrant Women Workers (which is also supported by Korean Church Women United), and Kumi Catholic Worker's Center, and is mostly engaged with the issues of foreign workers, provide legal or

such, the two organizations have shared the linked objectives of eradicating prostitution and protecting the human rights of prostitutes with other member organizations of the Hansori while publicizing the continual plight of U.S. camptown prostitutes (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999, 14).

However, the *kijich'on* movement has been neither a visible nor central concern of the Korean women's movement. Durebang has only recently been admitted to the Korean Women's Associations United (KWAU) as a member organization, even though it had existed before the February 1987 founding of the KWAU. This may be understood if one considers how the subjects of the kijich'on movement activism have been conceived in Korean society. Yanggongju (Western princess) has been ignored in official Korean histories as a national shame. Unlike in other women's movements, moreover, the kijich'on movement is a non-representative movement in which the subject (activists) and the object (prostitutes) are not the same. As one feminist confessed, "even though we as feminists can be workers, housewives, and victims of violence, sharing experiences of discrimination, labor, divorce, or sexual violence with other women, we cannot be prostitutes in U.S. camptowns" (Chong H. 1999, 301). Although similar to the relatively successful chongsindae (Japanese military sexual slavery during WW II) movement<sup>201</sup> in terms of opposition to "the sexual exploitation and abuse of women" by others and being motivated by "nationalism and Christian sensibility," the kijich'on movement has

medical advice, as well as shelters for foreign prostitutes (Brochure from Kyŏnggi Province 2003). <sup>201</sup> Due to the rigorous activism of Chong-Dae-Hyup, founded in 1990 and composed of twenty-three women's organizations, issues regarding chongsindae (Japanese military sexual slavery) could garner public attention throughout the world. The Chongsindae movement has been successful in forging international partnerships despite its strong ethno-nationalism. Chong-Dae-Hyup is now attempting to establish a museum of war, peace, and women.

puzzlingly been "localized and less recognized" (Moon K. 1999, 312). The next section examines the very several exceptions when the *kijich'on* movement and *kijich'on* women became visible, always when military prostitutes have been pushed to the frontline of the ideological confrontation between Korea's nationalism and U.S. imperialism.

#### 5.3. Gendered Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, and Women's Rights

#### 5.3.1. Anti-American Nationalism

As discussed in the previous section, the presence of *kijich 'on* prostitutes has been suppressed in the Korean people's consciousness for a long time. There are several reasons for Korean society's contempt of *kijich 'on* prostitutes and its disregard for them. First, Korean society has been racially and culturally homogeneous for thousands of years. It is not easy for Korean people to accept people who have different skin colors and cultures. For Korean people, those who have a "special relationship" with foreign soldiers, absolute strangers, are assumed to be not "really Korean" (Moon K. 1997, 3). Second, because Confucian morality, which values women's chastity, is deeply rooted in Korean society, Koreans consider *kijich'on* women "fallen women" – corrupt and lacking self-respect. Third, Confucianism has been accompanied by Korea's strong patriarchal culture that cherishes male offspring, paternal lineage and the biological continuation of family and clan lines (Cumings 1997, 52). The long tradition of valuing "pure" paternal blood has led Korean people to denigrate *kijich'on* prostitutes as doubly "impure": They are not only prostitutes

who place little value on chastity, they are also women who could potentially give birth to "impure" children who would disrupt Korea's pure blood lineage. And fourth, kijich'on prostitutes remind Korean people of their national "shame." They are living testaments of Korea's division, the shame of the Korean War, and Korea's continuing neocolonial relationship with the U.S. It is an intolerable national dishonor that the sexual domination of *yangki* (U.S. soldiers in particular and Americans in general) over Korean women should be continued for national security. Therefore, the presence of these women and camptowns became a national shame as well as, from most peoples' perspective, a necessary evil that they simply choose to ignore. The discourse of national security has intensified the invisibility of yanggongju (Western princess). Influenced by cold war ideology and confronted with the ongoing division of the nation, South Koreans have naturally accepted the priority of national security over individual rights. Collective violence against individuals has always been justified under the name of national security and understood as military security (Chung 2000, 227-29). As such, there have been few who pay attention to the human rights of the "non-human being," yanggalbo (Western whore). However, with the rise of strong anti-American sentiment intertwined with nationalism, kijich'on women began to garner attention from the Korean public, particularly nationalist activists, beginning in the early 1990s in conjunction with shifting political atmosphere.

Before the 1980s, in fact, anti-American rhetoric in South Korea was rare. For many Koreans, the U.S. was more than a friend; it was a savior of their nation and protector of liberal democracy from evil communist aggression (Shin 1996, 793).

Such a positive image of the U.S. has changed after the Kwangju in May 1980.<sup>202</sup> Despite U.S. denials, many Koreans were suspicious of the role U.S. forces, which had operational control over the Korean military, played in the massacre. They believed that without U.S. permission, the deployment of Korean troops for the violent crackdown on demonstrators was not possible, and that, moreover, U.S. official ignorance and unofficial support resulted in building up the autocratic military government. Korean people began to realize that it was only an illusion that the U.S. would support Korea's autonomous democratization as an "ally of liberational" and "big brother" (Yi S. 2001, 276-77). Alleged U.S. involvement in the massacre and establishment of Chun's military regime strongly shaped the subsequent development of anti-Americanism, particularly for those who were concerned mainly about national sovereignty and self-determination. Korean intellectuals and students came to believe that the U.S. stood in the way of democratization, so national liberation from U.S. dominance was regarded as a prerequisite to Korean democratization (Kim J. 1994, 44; Shin 1996, 79-74).

And then, around the time of the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988, a series of crimes involving U.S. soldiers against Korean people accelerated antagonism and triggered massive protests against the U.S.<sup>203</sup> At that time, there were few places

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> In May 1980, the Kwangju Democratization Movement began in the southwestern city of Kwangju as a student demonstration. The demonstration escalated into an armed struggle mobilizing hundreds of thousands of citizens against the seizure of power by General Chun Doo Hwan, who responded with brutal suppression. Many Koreans expected that the U.S. would and should actively intervene to stop the armed confrontation. Instead, the U.S. military command was alleged to have released South Korean troops for redeployment in Kwangju, and these troops then proceeded to massacre hundreds of anti-government protesters (Shin 1996, 793). Even though in the early 1990s, the Kwangju massacre was officially recognized by President Kim Young Sam as the "Democratization Movement," many Koreans remember it as tragic massacre.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> For further discussion about U.S. crimes against Korean people, see Yi S. (2001) and National Campaign (1999).

where "Yangki (U.S. soldiers in particular and Americans in general), imperialist and invader, go home" was not heard in Korean society. The significance is that the catchphrase, "Yangki, go home," became epidemic among Korean civilians, not just among the leftist movements (Yi S. 2001, 278-79). Thus the aspiration of the democratization movement shifted its emphasis from a struggle against domestic dictatorship to a struggle against the United States (Kim J. 1994, 45).

Amid this escalation in anti-American sentiment, Korean nationalists began to pay attention to the land occupied by camptowns and the bodies of military prostitutes as a complex allegory of the "suffering nation." As evidenced in the following statement of a famous Korean journalist, "[t]oday in 1990, from It'aewŏn to Tongduch'ŏn, P'aju, Osan, Kunsan, the history of pillage and plunder continues...this land [of Korea] is a land of sin. A land of disgrace" (O Yŏn-ho 1990; quoted in Kim H. 1998, 188). For Korean nationalists, *kijich'on* was evidence of the shameful national history of U.S. occupation. To reclaim national pride (*chajonssim*), the objectification of "our daughters" for "other nations' sexual desire" must end (Mal Magazine 1988, 112). Note that the target was national shame, not the abusive nature of prostitution itself.

#### 5.3.2. *Yanggongju*: Ambivalent Allegory of the Nation

The October 1992 murder of Yun Kum Yi, a military prostitute in Tongduch'on, by American soldier Kenneth Markle occurred amid the escalating anti-American sentiment. Even though it was one among many cases of crimes committed by American soldiers, Yun Kum Yi's case decisively ignited the anti-American movement. It was a historic event that brought U.S. military crimes against Korean

civilians into the public discussion and marshaled Korea's complex sentiments of nationalism towards anti-Americanism.

Yun Kum Yi was mutilated by a bottle struck into her vagina, an umbrella stuck into her rectum, matches pushed into her mouth, and detergent power spread all over her body. Her body was found in a pool of blood in the small room that she rented in *kijich'on*. The brutality of her death and also the fact that the American soldier could not be prosecuted by the Korean judiciary, due to the unequal agreement between the two governments (SOFA), ignited Korean people's fury that subsequently led to massive protests throughout the country.<sup>204</sup>

To fill the seemingly urgent need for unification of the two Koreas and independence from the U.S., Yun Kum Yi became idolized as a "national daughter" and a symbolic victim of U.S. imperialism, martyred at the hands of the U.S. military. Chon U-sop, for example, renowned minister of Tabita House (Dabitaui Jip, a counseling center for both Korean and foreign military prostitutes located in Tongduch'on), expressed the sentimentalized view of the nation associated with Yun Kum Yi's death: "The death of Yun Kum Yi is not the death of an individual. It is the death of national sovereignty, the death of national human capital" (Our Kum Yi, 1993, 6-7). The "dirty trash," *yanggalbo* (Western whore), who had never before belonged to the national community, came to be regarded as the "nation's soul" and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> For detailed discussion about Yun Kum Yi's death and related issues, see Chon (2001); Chong (1999); and National Campaign (2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> One Korean nationalist clarified that "the crime by the American soldier provoked the heart of this nation; this crime made us experience the stark reality of being completely robbed of our national sovereignty and dignity" (Our Kum Yi, 1993).

awakened the national spirit (Chŏn 2002, 8).<sup>206</sup> Through her death, *yanggongju* (Western princess) came alive as "real" Koreans.

As evident in the phrase, "oh, our daughter! Who violates our single daughter?" employed in editorials, articles, pamphlets of NGOs, and flyers passed around at students' demonstrations, a woman's body sexually violated by other nationals signified no less than a suffering nation and the lack of sovereignty and independence for Korea as a nation (Chŏng 1999, 341-42; Nogŭlli and Maehwangni 2001, 15; Kim H. 1998, 191). <sup>207</sup> To further utilize woman's body as evidence of the immoral, violent, and abusive imperial Self/Other, the horrifying photo of Yun Kŭm Yi's dead body was ubiquitously displayed (Our Kŭm Yi, 1993; National Campaign 1999, 50; Nogŭlli and Maehwangni 2001, 14-15).

Indeed, feminist scholars have pointed to a general tendency in national narratives to recognize only modest and chaste woman as symbols of national collective identity or bearers of the collectivity's honor. Because sexually "fallen" women, particularly those violated by foreigners, represent shame to national dignity or pride, they are usually excluded from the national community (Mayer 2000, 10). Yet, at the same time, masculinity is measured by its ability to defend the feminine that stands for the nation (Wenk 2000, 68-69). The effeminate male, who is not capable enough to protect women, represents the effeminized nation itself. Here,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> He indicated that Yun's death led to "the war against the U.S." to create "a new history to unify the divided nation peacefully, independently, and self-determinately" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> Similarly, the common sentiment expressed in editorials, articles, and readers' letters about World War II military comfort women is that it represented an affront to "national pride," which seems to be powerful enough to mobilize these feeling of unity among Koreans (Yang 1998, 128).

<sup>208</sup> In other words, the logic is that if our woman were humiliated by other men's sexual abuse, our

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> In other words, the logic is that if our woman were humiliated by other men's sexual abuse, our national pride is assaulted, since the woman's body is the property of the (masculine) nation.

Cynthia Enloe (1990) describes the strategy of feminizing the indigenous male as one of the colonizer's governing strategies. She describes how the British created and used the idea in order to

then, lies the paradox of nationalism. The nation simultaneously represents masculinity and femininity, which means that gendered images do not always operate in national narratives in the same fashion. When the nation is defined as an object to be "protected" from other nations' threats, the nation itself becomes feminized in a fashion that mobilizes national sons to defend "the motherland," where their girls, daughters, wives, and mothers who should be protected. Thus, national dignity must be recovered by reconfirming the nationalist masculine obligation to protect one's own women against assaults by foreigners. As Enloe (1990) points out, "becoming a nationalist requires a man to resist the foreigner's use and abuse of his women" (44). Even though nationalism typically has emerged from masculine memory, humiliation, and hope, and women's experiences have not been included as the basis of nationalism (ibid., 45-46), nationalism spontaneously needs a catalyst to fuel national sentiment. Therefore, the feminine is contradictorily deployed in accordance with shifting national interests.

The allegory of the Western princess (yanggongju), in this sense, is arbitrarily utilized in accordance with national interests. Kijich'on women's experience, voice, or body, which used to represent national shame and thus should be hidden from the "official" national history, became visible only when it was needed to mobilize feelings of unity as one nation. As the U.S. camptowns came to be viewed as a violation of national sovereignty and independence, so did women's bodies to androcentric nationalists; thus the Western princess's body became territorialized. What is clear is that nationalist discourse as well as positionality could be stabilized

berate Bengali men who appeared not to recognize their obligation to protect and revere women in India (46-49).

by appropriating the Western princess's death and claiming the dead body. As such, the incident of Yun Kum Yi was conceptualized and historically remembered as "an issue of nation and U.S. crime, not as a *kijich'on* women's issue" (Chong 1999, 333).

## 5.3.3. Second Rupture: the Anti-American Movement and Women's Rights as Human Rights

The Yun Kum Yi incident brought several significant outcomes to Korean society in general and to Korean social movements in particular. First of all, Korean people and civil society learned about kijich'on prostitutes and the kijich'on movement. The U.S. became aware of crimes conducted by its soldiers against kijich 'on women as well. 210 Most importantly, the prolonged struggle (approximately eighteen months) to prosecute the U.S. soldier, who murdered Yun under the Korean judiciary system enabled the establishment in October 1993 of the National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea, which subsequently led to a full-blown anti-American movement (Chong 1999, 338; National Campaign 2002, 38). This movement operationalized the specific term "U.S. military crime," which quickly achieved a social consensus and became widely used, to conceptualize crimes of U.S. troops against Korean civilians (Chong 2000, 223). As Yu Jin-Jeong, director of National Campaign, indicated, the Korean people began to realize that crimes by U.S. troops would continue "because of the arrogance of the U.S. Army as an occupational force, the Koran government's submission to the U.S., and the unequal nature of SOFA" (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999, 14). In conjunction with enhancement of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> Since then, U.S.-based media have intermittently reported crimes involving GIs and expressed their concern that crimes perpetrated by U.S. soldiers stationed abroad have prompted periodic outbursts of anti-Americanism (<u>Time Asia</u> August, 2002).

national pride, Koreans came to understand the nature of the supposedly symbiotic relationship between the two countries. It is also noteworthy that forty-eight organizations, including women's organizations, religious groups, students' organizations, human rights associations, youth organizations, and citizens in Tongduch'ŏn, built a tight coalition across ideological, gender, and class differences to systematically respond to the U.S. military crime (Chŏng 1999, 336-38; Chŏng 2000, 223).

In the meanwhile, women activists of the *kijich'on* movement, ironically, began to recognize the limits of nationalist approaches to *kijich'on* problems (interview with Ko). As mainstream rhetoric of "U.S. military crime" and "national pride" became increasingly centered on the specificity of Yun Kum Yi's murder, rather than on women's rights more broadly or on any sort of awareness of basic human rights and the systemic abuse of kijich'on women, activists of the kijich'on movement became frustrated with the gender blindness within the anti-American movement (Chŏn 1999; Chŏng H. 1999; Chŏng 2000). The rhetoric of the "lost territory" that should be recovered by male nationalists covered up the issues of kijich'on women's rights (Chŏn 1999, 339). Women activists realized that as the more crimes by U.S. troops were conceptualized as problems of national sovereignty, the less women's personal pain and daily suffering were questioned (Chong 2000, 229; Kim H. 2001, 64; Yi S. 2001, 52). In this atmosphere, there was no room for discussion about how Korean patriarchy, class inequality, and the nation state's policies contributed to the re-colonization and marginalization of military prostitutes (Kim H. 1998, 191).

It is ironic that the nationalists' response to crimes against prostitutes contributed to bringing national and international attention to the issue of Japanese comfort women, but not *kijich'on* women. In effect, "comfort women" has become a euphemism for prostitutes catering to foreign soldiers before the mid of 1980s when the issues of Japanese military comfort women began to be coming out to the public sphere in Korea. And the *kijich'on* movement has been overshadowed by the success of the comfort women movement in making Japanese comfort women more visible and internationally recognized (Moon K. 1999, 326; Han'guk Yŏsŏngyŏn'guso 1999, 390; interview with Yun).

Seeing that *kijich'on* women's experiences are selectively chosen only to mobilize national sentiment or to bring attention to an "evil empire," women activists became suspicious about "being in the progressive circle." Kim Dong Ssim, an important staff member in Durebang, confessed to conflicting emotions when she was involved in the National Campaign in 1994: "Extreme nationalists and androcentric male activists were dominant, occupying the space where I was marginalized. I was not mainstream because I was not a nationalist and my focus was on reducing female victims of crimes. Woman was my primary concern whereas 'U.S. crime' was theirs' (interview in November 2004). Astonished by the male nationalist approaches to "U.S. crimes against women," she was determined to get involved in the *kijich'on* movement. Dong Ssim painfully recalled that "they kept saying that 'U.S. troops

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>211</sup> According to Kim J. (1994), there are two different kinds of anti-Americanism in South Korea: one is "emotional anti-Americanism" and the other is "ideological anti-Americanism." Ideological anti-Americanism views the U.S. as the "evil empire" that should be destroyed, blaming the U.S. as the origin of many problems in South Korea, including a weakening economy, the continued division of Korea, and delayed democratization, whereas "emotional anti-Americanism" has grown basically because of the "influential American presence" in such a small country (38-39).

would withdraw from Korea and subsequently our two nations could be unified, *once terrible crimes against our women should increasingly happen*" (interview in November 2004) (emphasis mine). Androcentric nationalist concern over a *kijich'on* woman's death turned into demands for a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea, rather than becoming a question of human rights. Women activists became increasingly aware of the ways in which nationalism worked as a rhetoric as well as an activist practice, and began to redirect the *kijich'on* movement activism more toward women's issues rather than those of the nation. Furthermore, this sense of women's rights as human rights led them to awareness of the domestic sex industry and eventually to the burgeoning of the women's movement against prostitution. The process of consciousness-raising that rooted in shared commitment to struggle against patriarchal injustice, e.g., androcentric nationalism, enabled them to shift their collective identity of activists into "feminist activists."

#### 5.4. Women in *Kijich'on*: Continuity and Change

In the 1980s-1990s, *kijich'on* women were described through the rhetoric of national pride and sovereignty instead of, as had been the case in the 1960s-1970s, the rhetoric of national security and economic growth. Yet, little had changed in women's material conditions in *kijich'on* compared to those in the 1970s. According to a government statistics, "there are 12,000 workers in special vocations around *kijich'on*" in the mid-1980s (Chosun Ilbo 13 February, 1987). In 1988, the data showed that the number of prostitutes, serving 43,000 U.S. soldiers in Korea, was

more than 18,000 registered with the health authorities (Turshen and Holcomb 1993, 117; Kirk 1995, 12). That equaled approximately one prostitute for every two to three soldiers. For U.S. solders in the 1980s, Korea was still a "sex paradise" where "inexpensive" prostitutes were "widely available" (Strategy Page 19 November, 2004).

Clubs had two different systems of payment. Some women functioned as bartenders and were paid a straight salary for their attempts to sell high-priced drinks to customers. Most prostitutes, on the other hand, received a percentage or commission on the drinks that they sold to customers and on the money from the sale of their sexual labor (Sturdevant and Stoltzfus 1992, 177). The price of the drinks varied but most likely \$3-5 (non-alcoholic beverage) and \$20 (alcoholic beverage like whisky). Women were paid a commission of about 10-15 percent of the total, even though the amount of the commission varied from bar to bar. If they could not sell more than 150 drinks per month, they were not paid at all; if they exceeded this quota, they received a bonus (e.g., a gold ring for 600 drinks; special incentives for 1000 drinks). Generally 20 drinks per day was required to meet the monthly quota (Mal Magazine 1988 (26), 108). The cost for sex was \$15 for a short time and \$25 for overnight. Women were paid their commission by the club owner at the end of the month, but deductions may be made toward their debts to the club (Sturdevant and Stoltzfus 1992, 177). In this sense, women in kijich'on are beholden to their club owners or pimps through "the debt bondage system," accruing debts to their clubs that they had to pay off before leaving (Moon K. 1999, 315). On average, kijich'on

prostitutes' club debts ranged between one and four million won (\$1,462- \$5,847, respectively, based on 1988 rates) (Mal Magazine 1988 (26), 108).

The work permit system had also not changed much since the 1970s. In order to work in the bars, a woman had to register her name, address, and other vital information with the local police and the local VD clinic. She had to go to a clinic, operated by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, for regular gynecological and blood examinations in order to keep her VD card valid (Moon K. 1999, 316). In addition to the VD examinations, women were expected to take an HIV test each year, particularly since the mid-1980s when HIV and AIDS became publicized as "social problems," and kijich on began to be highlighted as the origin of the "disease" of death" (Chosun Ilbo 13 February, 1987). The card, serving both as a work permit and proof of "clean" health status, had to be renewed every week (Kirk 1995, 12). Yet, the card had nothing to do with women's genuine health. Even though kijich'on women suffered alcohol and drug abuse, at least in part, to cope with their difficult job, unwanted pregnancies, and other mental health problems, the clinics only checked and treated women for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) (Kim Y. 2005, 109-11; Kirk 1995, 13; Moon K. 1999, 314).

However, beginning in the late 1980s, *kijich'on* began to show quiet but significant changes that eventually caused significant demographic transformations. The number of Korean women in U.S. camptowns gradually decreased for various reasons. First of all, the pervasive depression of the *kijich'on* economy could no longer guarantee stable employment and a high income (Segye Ilbo 20 April, 1990; Hankyoreh 2 February, 1990). Reduction of U.S. armaments (Hankyoreh 2 February,

1990; 8 February; Kugmin Ilbo 26 June, 1990), the devaluation of the U.S. dollar, and the increased number of female soldiers in the U.S. military accelerated the decline of the kijich'on business (Chosun Ilbo 1 October, 1995). Due also to Korean economic growth, the financial status of U.S. soldiers became relatively downgraded, and \$5 -10 tips came to be regarded as "nothing" to the Koreans (Chosun Ilbo 1 October, 1995). Finally, the widespread fear of AIDS intensified women's anxiety about health and security and resulted in their moving into other sectors of the sex industry. They began to sell sex in bars and restaurants, as well as in public bathhouses, massage parlors, barbershops, room salons, motels, and hotels, rather than being limited "traditional" brothels (Castro 2003, 19). This diversification of prostitution meant not only that women could have more options to "work" in other places, but also that U.S. soldiers might pursue sex outside the *kijich'on*, leading to a decrease in the number of clients for kijich'on prostitution. When kijich'on prostitution guaranteed stable employment and high income, the occupational stigma, as well as the ostracism and humiliating treatment Korean women experienced from other Koreans, was a reasonable penalty for some women (Yu 1990, 116). However, when kijich'on was no longer the only source of foreign currency, because of Korea's economic as well as political development, kijich 'on prostitution came to be viewed as "a last stopover" for prostitutes, the lowest of the low. As one survey indicated, "among prostitutes, military prostitutes are conceived as the lowest in rank and kisaengs servicing Japanese tourists as the highest level of prostitutes" (Mal Magazine 1988 (26), 107). This hierarchy was clear economically also, for the average monthly income of a kijich'on prostitute was \$200-300 before1997, which was much less than kisaengs'

earnings (ibid., 111),<sup>212</sup> and relatively low compared to the earnings from other forms of domestic prostitution (Durebang 2004, 55).

Anti-American sentiment, which had been increasing since the 1980 Kwangju massacre, also significantly informed the decrease in Korean military prostitutes (Kim 2002, 38; Chosun Ilbo 1 October, 1995). As evidenced in the previous chapter, kijich'on prostitutes have been despised as "dirty trash," for what is seen as their immorality and corrupting influence, and actively excluded from the Korean national community. At the same time, kijich'on women have also been imbued with "an alluring glow by virtue of their link to America's modernity and material abundance" (Yuh 1999, 18). The contradictory view of kijich 'on women mirrored the contradictory relationship Koreans have with and to the United States: The mythical America of prosperity and opportunity has been an object of envy and admiration, and at the same time, that of negation and hatred. As Yuh (1999) pointed out, under the dominant discourse that considers the U.S. the savior who rescued Korea from Japanese imperialism as well as from communism, "American heroism and generosity joins with American material abundance into an image of utopia" (19). Its economic power coupled by the image of big brother has haunted Korean people for a long time. But due to persistent aspirations of democratization and growing confidence in the national economy, Koreans began to demystify the image of the American GI as a "good big brother" and began (re)imagining him as "dangerous and less educated," an "intruder" (National Campaign 1999; Korea Truth Commission on U.S. Military Massacres of Civilians during the Korean War; Kim E. 2002, 38). America was no longer a sacred site free from criticism, nor a symbol of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> In the mid 1980s, kisaengs were paid four times than kijich'on prostitutes (ibid.).

insurmountable wealth. Members of the new generation especially who have no shameful memory of colonialism, disastrous war, and absolute poverty, refused the role of submissive recipient of U.S. "generosity." Many Koreans expected equal relationships with the U.S., rather than the role of subordinated partner.

These changes in the political as well as economic atmosphere shaped kijich'on women's views of the U.S. and resulted in many women avoiding work as yanggongju (Western princess). The U.S. was not a dream world any more, as one Korean prostitute said, "I know some women still want go to the U.S. But most women are reluctant to do so, because we can make a living here in Korea, and why should we struggle in a place where we cannot communicate in Korean?" (interview with a Korean military prostitute in December 2004). Due to anti-American sentiment, Kim Yŏn-Ja, a former military prostitute, could speak openly about her experience. When testifying in 1994 about her experiences in kijich'on, however, she recognized what people really wanted to know. It was not about her life, everyday experience, and/or hope and possibility for change, but about torturous memories like rape, violence, and abuse related to U.S. militarism (Kim 2005, 270-73). She asks, "for what? For what? I felt I was being used to expose the nature of the U.S. military and crimes of U.S. troops in South Korea. It was regrettable. My journey of testimony turned out to be useless for improving kijich'on women's daily lives. Nothing changed." (interview with Kim Yŏn-Ja in December 2005). She posed a salient question, particularly in light of the uses to which kijich'on women's bodies and voices have been put, for not only the imperialist, but also for the nationalist and feminist agendas: What does it mean to use one's voice to speak to and/or speak up?

And for whom and for what? *Kijich'on* women's direct action and vibrant voices have ironically vanished since then.

#### Conclusion

In sum, this chapter is an analysis of the South Korean women's movement against military prostitution (kijich'on movement), exploring its emergence, transformation, and implications as well as limitations during the 1980s and 1990s. South Koreans experienced a transition from military dictatorship to the institutionalization of democracy as well as the proliferation and diversity of women's movements during this period. Yet, the kijich'on movement and issues of kijich'on women have not garnered the public's attention until their conjunction with crimes by U.S. troops and Korean nationalism. Moreover, although a strong sense of nationalism accompanied by anti-Americanism led to formulating the National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea and enables the chongsindae movement to demand redress for World War II "comfort women," the kijich on movement was faced with an androcentric nationalism that arbitrarily utilized kijich'on women's experience in the name of national pride and sovereignty. While continuously negotiating the boundaries of gender and nation, these conflicts had the kijich 'on movement to be more engaged in women's rights and domestic prostitution, which resulted in development of the women's movement against prostitution, as discussed further in chapter 6. On the other hand, in the process of Korea's national development and democratization, ironically, the status of kijich 'on women became increasingly

downgraded, and as the activist voices of *kijich'on* women began to speak out for themselves, their voices were not heard.

# Chapter 6: Trans/Formation of *Kijich'on*: Transnational Prostitutes and Changes in Politics

#### Introduction

In October 2002, the Embassy of the Philippines in Seoul filed a lawsuit against the owner of Club 69, which was located in a U.S. military camptown, Tongduch'ŏn. According to the lawsuit, eleven Filipina prostitutes were rescued in June 2002 by Korean police after allegedly being abused and exploited by a Korean club owner (The Daily Tribune 2 November 2002; Hankyoreh 20 October 2002; Dong-a Ilbo 20 October 2002). The diary of an unidentified victim revealed that she and her coworkers went through many harrowing experiences at Club 69, where they were treated as "sex slaves" (The Daily Tribune 2 December 2002). Korean and international media reported on this case with keen interest, for it was the first legal case associated with transnational prostitutes<sup>213</sup> serving U.S. soldiers stationed in Korea. Importantly, according to a report commissioned by the International Organization of Migration in July 2001, the U.S. government categorized Korea as one of 23 Tier 3 countries<sup>214</sup> not satisfying the U.S. minimum standards of human rights (Report of the State Department June 2001; Stars and Stripes 2 March, 2005)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> The term "transnational prostitutes" means prostitutes moving and working across national borders, which is linked to a conception of the nation-state and to the shifting locations of those engaged in the sex industry. However, "transnational" and "foreign" are used interchangeably to reflect the current use from different perspectives including those inside/outside feminist groups, the Koreans, and Americans.

The report classified nations into three tiers. Tier 1 lists nations in compliance with the minimum standards of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, ratified by the U.S. Congress, for the abolishment of trafficking. Tier 2 lists nations not in compliance with the minimum standards but making progress to comply with the standards. And Tier 3 lists those nations that do not meet even such minimum standards (U.S. Department of State, July 2001).

for seeing as "a country of origin and transit for trafficking in persons." The three issues emerging from an analysis of this case reveal the current face of *kijich'on*: first, non-Korean women now were working as prostitutes to serve American soldiers; second, these women came to Korea on arts and entertainment (or E-6) visas, which were utilized as the main means of human trafficking; and third, both Korean and U.S. governments were not only aware of foreign prostitutes working in the *kijich'on*, but were also tacitly supporting them, despite varied visible efforts to counter human trafficking and prostitution.

In fact, the *kijich'on* has experienced dramatic changes beginning in the mid-1990s. One of the most significant changes has been the employment of foreign women as cheaper and more vulnerable prostitution labor replacing local Korean women. Interestingly, when the subjects in the *kijich'on* change from "our women" to "others," the discourse of human rights eclipses that of U.S. militarism and Korea's nationalism, which have fueled the anti-American movement among Korean civilians since the 1980s.

In addition to the growing presence of foreign women as exploited sex workers, the other crucial factors which affected the transformation of military prostitution in Korea are the U.S. government's stance on military prostitution, its interactions with Korean government policy on prostitution, and the growing power of Korean feminist NGOs to challenge and intervene in relevant domestic policy. This chapter analyzes newly emergent politics surrounding the *kijich'on* in this era of globalization. I examine, particularly, how various ideological aims and reactions

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Excerpts from "Trafficking in Persons Report," released by the U.S. Department of State, July 2001, 98. http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/4107.pdf

demarcate the boundaries of nation, race, and gender (re)producing the politics of U.S. military camptowns.

### **6.1. Emergence of New Strangers** <sup>216</sup>

#### 6.1.1. Decrease in Koreans

Since the mid-1990s, foreign women have replaced Korean women as major players in the *kijich'on*. According to Durebang's research in 2004, 90 percent of *kijich'on* prostitutes are now Russians and Filipinas (Durebang 2004, 53). A member of the Korean National Assembly officially confirmed, in the same year, that Filipinas number 730 (81 percent), Russians 81 (9 percent), and Koreans 88 (9.8 percent) among 900 registered *kijich'on* prostitutes in Kyŏnggi province (<u>Ilyosisa</u> 24 October 2004).<sup>217</sup>

The emergence of new strangers is closely linked to the decreased number of Korean prostitutes for various reasons. The recession of *kijich'on* caused a high rate of departure of Korean women from *kijich'on* (Durebang 2004, 55). Diversification and proliferation of the sex industry paralleling Korea's booming economy is another reason. As discussed in the previous chapter, because of continued social stigma attached to women who sell their bodies to foreigners, increased job insecurity,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>216</sup> For Koreans, Russians and Filipinas are absolute strangers either as origins of danger that should be expelled or as exotic others embodying origins of difference. As Ahmed (2000) puts it, both of these standpoints are problematic as they involve "stranger fetishism" based upon the assumption of ontology of strangers (4). Ahmed deconstructs the notion of "stranger fetishism" in an attempt to highlight how many aspects of society are contingent on a process through which the stranger becomes an abstracted, universalized figure: "Stranger fetishism is a fetishism of figures: it invests the figure of a stranger with a life of its own insofar as it cuts 'the stranger' off from the histories of its determination"(5) (Ahmed's emphasis).

Specifically, after issuing E-6 visa to Russians was suspended in August 2003, Filipinas have become the overwhelming majority of military prostitutes (<u>Ilyosisa</u> 24 October 2004).

Korea's sentiment of anti-Americanism, and the relatively low remuneration compared to pay in other forms of prostitution, military prostitutes were regarded as the lowest in status among prostitutes, and many women consequently departed from *kijich'on*.

#### 6.1.2. Korea's Globalization and Migration Policy

The changing patterns and situations in *kijich'on* populations cannot be fully explained without a discussion of Korea's role in globalization and related domestic policy to import migrant workers. In the process of Korea's increased participation in a globalizing economy, so called Segvehwa, 218 South Korea was faced with a dramatic number of unfilled production jobs (approximately 222,000 in 1991) as well as with the increased number of educated and skilled workers who avoided taking jobs classified as "3D": dirty, difficult, and dangerous. In order to cope with the labor shortage, rising labor costs and aggressive labor movements, Korean employers tried to relocate their firms overseas in developing Asian countries, or to bring in migrant workers to Korea (Lee H. 2003, 129). Facilitated by the state, importing foreign laborers, since the mid-1990s, has become Korea's strategy to cut production costs and to meet keen economic competition from other East Asian countries (Chow 2002, 18). In 1988, there were 45,000 foreigners in the Republic of Korea; the number of employment-related visas issued in 1989 reached 162,000. By 2001, the number of foreign residents had more than quadrupled to 230,000, 129,000 of whom were in the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> Koreans refer to *segyehwa* as Korea's drive toward globalization. Particularly, under the president Kim Young Sam's administration, the first civilian government in thirty years, the term *segyehwa* was regarded as "far more comprehensive [than the term globalization], embracing political, cultural, and social openmindedness" (Kim S. 2000, 2-3).

labor force (OECD, 2004 quoted in IOM, 2005).<sup>219</sup>

However, the Korean government granted firms the capabilities to import foreign laborers not as workers but as "industrial and technical trainees" based upon the "principle of substitution," which specifies the actions that should be taken in cases where there are too few Korean workers (KWDI 2001, 15). In principle, the Departure and Arrival Control Act, which is the *de facto* South Korean immigration law, does not allow unskilled foreign labor to enter Korea in order to augment the workforce. In reality, a large number of migrant workers have rapidly accumulated in South Korea for the purpose of employment (IOM 2002, 23).

Korea's immigration policy caused the emergence of two peculiar characteristics of migration, which are consequently related to military prostitution: the large share of unauthorized workers and the influx of foreign female entertainers. On the one hand, migrant workers easily became a pool of unauthorized workers, because the Korean government, supposedly to protect the domestic workforce, has not expanded the quota for foreign trainees. This persists even though migrant workers are helping Korean economies by accepting jobs that domestic workers would not consider taking<sup>220</sup> (IOM 2002, 23). Also, the industrial trainee program allows foreign trainees to receive a limited-period work permit (one to two years) (Lee H. 2003, 132-33). Finally, the demand for migrant workers as cheap labor has increased with the recovery of the Korean economy from the so-called Asian

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup>http://www.iom.int/en/pdf%5Ffiles/wmr2005%5Fpresskit/wmr%5Fchap23%5Feng/wmr%5Flabour %5Fmigration%5Fasia.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>220</sup> In 2000 post-training workers (E-8) visas began to be issued as a new category introduced by a "Working after Training Program for Foreigners." Under this program, trainees who pass certain skill tests after a two-year training period, can continue to work for one year as "workers" and thereby they change their visa status to the "working after training (E-8) category." The year 2000 saw the first group of these post-training workers (IOM 2002, 24).

financial crisis that began in 1999.<sup>221</sup> In 1990, Korea had fewer than 19,000 migrant workers; by 2002, the migrant worker population soared to 337,000 (Lee 2003, 130-31; KWDI 2001, 15). About 78.7 percent of migrant workers in 2001were unauthorized workers and 35.7 percent of the unauthorized workers are women (KWDI 2001, 15).<sup>222</sup>

In connection with this phenomenon, the influx of foreign entertainers with E-6 visas has soared since 1996, facilitated by the change from a "permission" to a "report system" (Lee 2003, 138). As Figures I, II, and III indicate, the Philippines and former Soviet countries have been major sending countries of E-6 visa holders. The real figure is likely to be much higher than the estimates of official reports, because many entertainers, like other migrant workers, overstay their visas and become "illegal," and many Filipinas and Russians enter Korea with C-3 visas (short-term visitor visas). According to the Ministry of Justice (2003), there were 274 foreign female entertainers in Korea in 2003, and about 34 percent of them exceeded the usual six-month period of stay. Considering undocumented migrants, the real figure cannot be easily discerned.

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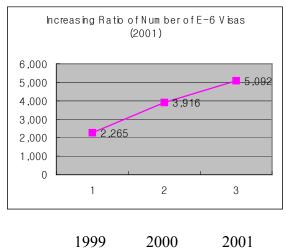
The inter/national economic crisis that hit Korea in 1997 began with devaluation of currency followed by bankruptcy of many companies, mass dismissal, rapid growth of unemployment, and the IMF intervention to Korean polity and policy. Despite a reduction following the financial crisis of 1997, Korean authorities estimated that the number of migrants in an irregular situation had risen from 65,500 in 1992 to 148,000 in 1997, and had continued to grow after 1999 to reach an estimated 255,000 in 2002. To control undocumented immigration, a regularization drive was carried out in 2002, and the government undertook to deport all those who still remained in an irregular situation in 2003 (OECD, 2004; quoted in IOM, 2005 "Labor Migration in Asia,"

http://www.iom.int/en/pdf%5Ffiles/wmr2005%5Fpresskit/wmr%5Fchap23%5Feng/wmr%5Flabour%5Fmigration%5Fasia.pdf).

In 2004, 25 percents of migrant workers are unauthorized (188,000) (The Korean Ministry of Justice, http://www.moj.go.kr/).

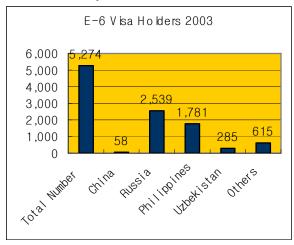
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> The executive director of the KATA said in an interview with me, "Because of domestic women's high wage, we could not run our bars and clubs to make ends meet. We had no choice but to import foreign women" (December 2004). A bar owner's notes in Baek's research (2000) concur, "it is very hard to recruit Korean women. And even if they are available, they cost a lot, so we cannot make any profit. That's why foreign women are needed" (104).

<Figure 1. Number of E-6 Visa Holders>



<Source: Korea Immigration Bureau (<a href="http://www.immigration.go.kr/">http://www.immigration.go.kr/</a>)>

<Figure 2. Nationality of E-6 Visa Holders in 2003>



<Source: Korea Immigration Bureau (http://www.immigration.go.kr/)>

<Figure 3. Foreign Female E-6 and C-3 Visa Holders (July 2003)>

118014 5.1 5141811 4111014 2 5 4110 6 5 4 150 11510415 (6 41) 2005)											
Visa	Classification	Total	Russia	Philippines	Uzbek	China	Indonesia	Others			
		N.									
E-6	Total N.	5,274	2,535	1,781	285	58	7	608			
	Overstayed	1,811	588	937	169	51	1	147			
		(34.3%)	(23%)	(52.6%)							
C-3	Total N.	59,087	5, 775	3,283	1,692	36,422	160	11,755			
	Overstayed	40,867	2,313	2,844	1,481	28,060	104	6,026			
		(69%)	(40%)	(86.6%)							

Source: The Ministry of Justice (2003)>

The E-6 visa, which is used to import foreign prostitutes, began being issued in 1994.<sup>224</sup> This visa was created to permit foreigners to work in the arts and entertainment industry as artists, musicians, dancers, or singers. It is processed on behalf of and controlled by foreign-related organizations or agencies approved by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Lee H. 2003, 139). 225 However, the hidden purpose of these visas is to cope with the decreasing availability of Korean prostitutes. This becomes evident when two additional facts are observed. First, foreign entertainers must complete health exams before coming to Korea, and be reexamined every three months including a biannual HIV test. Father Glen Jarron of the Filipino Catholic Center in Seoul asks, "Why should they require entertainers to have an AIDS test and not require this of ordinary factory workers? That is tantamount to saying that the girls are not really going into that kind of work," (Stars and Stripes 28 November 2004). Second, and most transparently, the main contractor of E-6 visa holders is the Korean Special Tourism Organization (KSTA), an umbrella organization that consists of 189 nightclubs in different areas of U.S military camptowns. As a result of the invention of the E-6 visa, and under the clandestine cooperation of the Korean government with the KSTA, the number of foreign prostitutes in U.S. camptowns exceeded that of Korean women by two to four times in 2001. 226 Even as the Ministry

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> The Korean government diversified working visas in 2000, issuing E-1 (University Professors), E-2 (Language Teachers), E-3 (Researchers), E-4 (Technology Instructors), E-5 (Other Professionals), E-6 (Entertainers), and E-7 (Specific Activities that cannot be done by native workers) to foreigners entering Korea for "professional purposes" (KWDI 2001, 15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>225</sup> In principle, E-6 visa should be issued to foreigners who, "for the good of profit making, wish to be engaged in activities such as music, art, literature, entertainment, performance, plays, sports, advertising, fashion modeling, and other occupations that correspond to those above" (South Korean Immigration Bureau 2000, 85).

According to statistics of the Korean Women's Associations United (KWAU), the "official" number of Korean women working in bar clubs in the U.S. military camptowns Uijeongbu, Pyungtaek, P'aju, and Tongduchon in 2001 was 295. The number of Filipinas in these areas was 559 and that of

of Justice admitted in 2002 that about 90 percent of foreign entertainers were working in bars, clubs, hotels and/or clubs in the U.S. military camptowns (Chosun Ilbo, 27 September 2002).

<Table 2> Ratio of Increase & Nationality of Prostitutes in four major *kijich'ons* (Tongduch'ŏn, P'yŏngtaek, P'aju, and Ŭijŏngbu)

	Number of	Koreans	Filipinas	Russians	Total Number of
	Clubs				Prostitutes
1999	162	1, 269	636	149	2,052
2001	172	386	671	512	1,569
Percentage	110	30	110	340	80
(%)					

<Source: Saeumto 2001b, 78>

#### 6.1.3. Interplay of Philippine National Interests and Gender Ideology

In principle, migration is a result of dynamic push/pull factors. The pull factors are constituted by the consumer demand for foreign women and the push factors include desires of women from low-income countries to move to higher income countries with expected economic benefits to the countries of origin including women's family members (Farr 2005, 7; Simons 1999, 131).<sup>227</sup> Internationally, the growth of economic gaps between nations facilitates the international flow of prostitutes within the context of the globalizing economy. Many researchers have concluded that women come to Korea crossing national borders and become prostitutes due to economic hardship in their countries of origin (GAATW 1998; Baek 2000; Korean

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Russian women 512. The increasing ratio of the number of Koreans, Filipinas, and Russians in 2001, compared to 1999, was respectively - 40%, 130 percent, and 340 percent (KWAU 2002a).

227 The life experiences of women who have become trafficking victims in current literature tell the

similar stories of women's struggles to support themselves and their families and in search of better lives (Farr 2005, 7).

Women's Association United 2002; Santos 2002; <u>Manila Times</u> 5 January 2002). As domestic work options for marginalized groups of people who reside in poor nations become increasingly limited, they choose to cross borders for better opportunities. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Philippine economy prompted some women to go to other nations to earn money. Because the country of destination is determined by the global market system, the Korean economic boom is a key factor drawing these women.

However, non-economic aspects of the country of origin always mediate the financial incentive of cross-border movements. In effect, the current global capitalist market is based on gendered divisions of labor and a bifurcated wage structure in which men's work is re-privileged over women's work, and where women are situated at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale across nations and paid less than men. Gender ideology indicating that women's primary work is in the home and that women should take care of family welfare justifies women's subordinate position; this in turn coincides with the ideal notion of masculinity identified with the claims of "breadwinner" status. Therefore, as Hennessy (2000) points out, the bottom line for extracting surplus value under the regime of flexible accumulation is rigidly gendered. Women thus remain the most desirable source of cheap and malleable labor at this moment of globalization (157).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> According to statistics of the International Organization of Migration (IOM) in 1995 over 50,000 women from Russia and other post-Soviet nations were illicitly trafficked into Western European nations and currently some of them are being trafficked into Korea, Japan, and Thailand. Estimates also show that at least 300,000 Filipinas have been trafficked as prostitutes since the early 1990s. As Farr (2005) points out, the conditions under which sex trafficking evolves and thrives are economic, political, and social. While some conditions are local, many are specific to the era of globalization. Currently the most rapidly expanding source of sex-trafficked women, the former Soviet republics, provides a good contextual example of the supply side of sex trafficking in the era of globalization (7-8).

Trends in Filipino migration patterns mostly derive from a gendered ideology (Santos 2002) that views women as sexual objects as well as supporters of the family. 229 As a woman NGO in the Philippines states, "there is really no need to coerce" women, because of "poverty" and "obligation to help her family survive," "she is willing to risk herself" [by crossing national borders] (Manila Times 5 January 2002). It is evident that as more Filipino families have begun to depend on women for financial support, female migration has also increased: from 111,487 in 1996; to 123,399 in 1997; to 133, 458 in 1998; up to 151,840 in 1999 (Manila Times 2 January 2002). 230 Most female migrants are classified as either domestic helpers or overseas performing artists (OPAs).<sup>231</sup> Because the Philippine government has been a main beneficiary of the large source of remittances of these female migrants. 232 the active migrant policy of the Philippine government has been implemented based upon gendered ideology (Kapur 2003, 7-8). In fact, the services of Filipinas abroad earned the Philippines approximately 12 percent of its gross national product in 1992. The reality that Filipinas are a valuable source of foreign currency fed the continuous efforts of the Philippine government to "market their female nationals as global service providers" and "to cash in on this vital export commodity" (Change & Groves

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>229</sup> Most Filipinas I met in *kijich'on* in 2004 agreed that the main cause of their migration was "family aid." For example, Tina (24 years old) explained her cross-border move as a result of her husband's violence and the need to support her young children living in the Philippines, cared for by her parents (interview in August 2004). Similarly, Brenda (25 years old), a former prostitute in the Philippines, wanted to go to Korea to earn more money quickly to better support her poor family (interview in August 2004).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>230</sup> In 2000, a total of 841,628 migrant workers from the Philippines were legally deployed; spatially they found employment in over 160 countries and territories (Tyner 2002; quoted in Castro 2003, 22). <sup>231</sup> OPAs are officially defined as "professional workers, and would include such occupations as dancers, choreographers, musicians, singers, and so forth" (Castro 2003, 24). Since September 2004, Artist Accreditation Card has been issued by the Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) (Durebang 2005, 26).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>232</sup> Globally every year, migrant workers send home the equivalent of \$100 billion in remittances to support families and communities and contribute to development in home countries (ILO, <u>Facts on Migrant Labor 2005</u>).

2000, 76-77). Overseas Filipina workers are called "heroines of the Philippine economy."<sup>233</sup>

In sum, the economics and politics of transnational prostitution are not only linked by Korea's domestic migration policy but also based upon globalizing capitalism intertwined with gender ideology. The interplay between Korea's demand for migrant workers as cheap labor and Philippine economic interests results in the population change in U.S. military camptowns and makes the *kijich'on* scene more complicated.

#### 6.2. Janus-faced U.S. Policy

Interestingly, when the women in *kijich'on* changed from "ours" to "others," the issues of U.S. militarism and imperialism became blurred with the discourse of human rights. It is fairly ironic that the U.S. co-opted a discourse of global human rights concerning prostitution. Ignoring, condoning, and tacit approving of military prostitution, along with actual control over prostitutes to prevent VD among the troops, have been the primary U.S. strategies to avoid or alleviate external criticism with regard to military prostitution. Yet, its brazen attitude became manifest in the era of globalization. On the one hand, Korea was condemned for violating human rights; on the other, the U.S. was represented as a liberal, democratic, and ideal regime, having seemingly humanitarian policies and interests.

#### 6.2.1. Drives for Anti-Trafficking as the International Police

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> President Fidel Ramos, in 1991, called Filipinas who leave the Philippines to become domestic workers worldwide "heroines of the Philippine economy" (Simons 1999, 132).

In the beginning of the new century, the U.S. took the initiative in developing and international consensus around trafficking. In 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act. It was enacted under the lead of Representative Christopher H. Smith, who aimed to put the U.S. solidly against the growing international trade in women (Time Asia August, 2002). Subsequently, in July 2001, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) announced that the U.S. government categorized Korea as one of twenty-three Tier 3 countries (Report of the State Department June 2001; Third World Network September, 2002; Stars and Stripes 2 March, 2005). <sup>234</sup> Basically, the U.S. demanded Korea's commitment to work against human trafficking, while blaming the Korean government's for its limited response to human trafficking. Positioning both Korean and foreign women as trafficked victims, the U.S. called for the enactment of a related law and that the government provide assistance to trafficking victims and also to NGOs that assist victims.

In response to the U.S. report, the South Korean government's attitude was, at best, defensive and, at worst, antagonistic toward the U.S., with no official comment on U.S. military prostitution. Surprised by the report, the Korean government charged

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The report reads: "South Korea is a country of origin and transit for trafficking in persons. Young female Koreans are trafficked primarily for sexual exploitation, mainly to the United States, but also to other Western countries and Japan. Female aliens from many countries, primarily Chinese women, are trafficked through Korea to the United States and many other parts of the world. In addition to trafficking through air, much transit traffic occurs in South Korean territorial waterways by ship. While South Korea is a leader in the region on human rights and democracy generally, the Government has done little to combat this relatively new and worsening problem of trafficking in persons. Although it does prosecute alien smuggling activities such as visa fraud and possession or sale of fraudulent civil documents, there are no laws that specifically address trafficking. There are statutes against kidnapping and sale or purchase of sexual services with juvenile and maximum penalties for these commensurate with those for rape. Although corruption occurs, there is no evidence that government officials are involved in trafficking in persons. Aliens are treated as immigration violators and deported. No government assistance is available for trafficking victims or to support NGOs involved in assisting trafficking victims" (Excerpts from "Trafficking in Persons Report," released by the U.S. Department of State, July 2001, 98. http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/4107.pdf).

that it portrayed Korea negatively and was not based on an adequate review of the country's situation. According to a report from the Ministry of Justice in Korea (10 August 2001), the Korean government claimed that it made efforts to prohibit the trafficking of women through various means, citing for example, that the Korean government has eagerly protected foreign women workers' rights, with no punishment, just requiring deportation. The Korean government urged Washington to make immediate changes to reflect conditions in the country, which included various articles of Korean criminal law that heavily punish those involved in the sale of human beings for prostitution (IOM 2002, 10). Moreover, some Korean government officials argued that particular foreign prostitutes were not forced victims, but "criminals" in violation of Korea's laws regarding prostitution and immigration (Durebang 2005, 14-15). The argument implicitly implied that foreign prostitutes came to Korea voluntarily as well as illegally just to earn money, so they could not be regarded as real victims of trafficking and needed not be protected by the Korean government.

The Koreans' bitter "complaints of the labeling" (Stars and Stripes 11 July, 2003) were, more or less, directed by a strong sense of national pride. "I admit that the Korean government has cooperated with bar and club owners to import foreign entertainers or at least condoned the sex trade. Nonetheless, why should we [Koreans] meet the U.S. standards of human rights? Who has the authority to determine the criteria?" said the director in Women Migrants Human Rights Center (interview in October 2004). Feminist activists at least criticized the U.S. for accusing Korea of human rights abuses as a strategic ways of covering up the real situation of *kijich'on* 

and avoiding its responsibility for military prostitution. Kim Hyun Sun, director of Saeumto, expressing her resentment of U.S. attitudes, noted that she "really appreciate[s] U.S. awareness and effort to abolish prostitution worldwide. However, it is the U.S. that should be taking charge [of efforts to abolish prostitution] because it is American soldiers who have been the real patrons of military prostitutes and the U.S. government has cooperated with the Korean government to support and sustain *kijich'on*. Therefore, prior to mentioning Korea's task, U.S. responsibility should be considered" (KWAU 2002, 2).

Nonetheless, South Korea should show "remarkable" improvement to get the U.S. endorsement and to recover its international reputation. With several visible actions such as a new guarantee to halt E-6 visas, intensive patrolling of brothels and suspicious bars, and active cooperation with women's organizations working with prostitution, Korea would successfully be included as Tier 1 next year of 2002 (DOS 2002, 18), 235 with the following comments:

Several countries increased their efforts to combat trafficking, since issuance of the Department's 2001 report. In some cases, the increased efforts justified moving the country to a higher tier. As an example, South Korea, which has made extraordinary strides since the last report, moved from Tier 3 to Tier 1 (Department of State 2002, 12).<sup>236</sup>

Further, since shutting down 660 brothels, ceasing to grant entertainment visas issued to Russians in 2004, and enacting the Anti-Prostitution Law, Korea continuously met the U.S. standard and sustained its Tier 1 status in both 2004 and 2005. The U.S.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> In the report of 2002, Korea was one among Austria, France, Macedonia, Spain, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, Hong Kong, Poland, United Kingdom, Colombia, Italy, Portuga 1, Czech Republic, and Lithuania.

http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/10815.pdf

Department of State assessed Korea's efforts as an improvement to the system, commenting that Korea has taken "important steps to reduce police corruption associated with trafficking" (Stars and Stripes 2 March, 2005). As such, the U.S. authority as a supervisor of other countries is reconfirmed, and ironically *kijich'on* prostitution pertaining to the U.S. military was left out of the conversation and made invisible.

# 6.2.2. Audacious Repudiation and the Zero-Tolerance Policy

A few months after the 2001 Report was released, however, two consecutive incidents forced the U.S. to defend itself from the accusation of human trafficking. In April 2002, Fox News reported on bars, clubs, and brothels in *kijich'on* where women from the Philippines and Russia were forced into prostitution, alleging U.S. GIs and military police patrols were patronizing them. Alarmed by the news report, U.S. Senator Helsinki Commission chairman, Rep. Christopher Smith, and twelve members of Congress requested an immediate Pentagon investigation. In June, the Pentagon pledged to investigate the trafficking allegations in Korea and check other U.S. military installations around the world (<u>Time Asia</u> August, 2002). <sup>237</sup> The investigation looked into the military's role in the sex trade in Korea, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. A report issued after that investigation faulted military commands for a misperception of human trafficking problems, and indicated that further education for service-members was needed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> In the letter to the Pentagon in May 2002, the legislators asked U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to take action, stating that "If U.S. soldiers are patrolling or frequenting these establishments, the military is in effect helping to line the pockets of human traffickers" (ibid.).

The second incident concerned a Filipina prostitutes' lawsuit, in October 2002, that further puzzled the U.S. public, because it seemed to invalidate U.S. official anti-trafficking policy. Confronted with the lawsuit, the initial response of the U.S. government was to deny U.S. involvement in transnational prostitution. Major General James Soligan in the U.S. forces in South Korea said in an interview, "from a policy view, we have taken a clear stance that these are not circumstances that are condoned, supported, encouraged or [that we] would allow our soldiers to participate in" (Los Angeles Times 26 September, 2002). To effectively repudiate the claim that the U.S. government and military soldiers are patrons of transnational prostitutes, it was necessary to shift the responsibility onto the Korean government with the following assertions: "[we] would investigate whether the prohibition on prostitution and trafficking in Korea is being enforced" (People's Daily 4 September, 2002) and "[we will] not overlook illegal prostitution" in Korea (Hankyoreh 18 October 2002). It is interesting to note that the U.S. in the same year had designated Korea, as a Tier 1 country.

In response to the controversial issues, the USFK (U.S. Forces in Korea) officially adopted a "zero-tolerance policy" in January 2004 and reinforced regulations over soldiers' activities (Durebang 2005, 49). U.S. military officials in Korea explained that they embarked on an aggressive program to combat the sex trade and human trafficking, including an increase in both uniformed and non-uniformed patrols in known sex-trade enclaves, putting suspect establishments and even entire neighborhoods off-limits, and creating a human trafficking hotline for service members to report suspected cases (ibid.). Education for the division's leaders

and soldiers "on the awareness, identification and reduction of prostitution and human trafficking outside the U.S. installations" became strengthened (<u>Stars and Stripes</u> 8 November, 2004).

According to the USFK, the zero-tolerance policy literally meant that the USFK was "not going to tolerate the behavior which is dehumanizing, demoralizing, and illegal," particularly regarding prostitution crimes (Stars and Stripes 8 November, 2004), but its ultimate goal was always to ensure U.S. soldiers' safety. Under the policy, the Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board began to meet in order to respond to any "issues that affect the safety of our soldiers including the safety of offpost clubs" (Maj. Tamara Parker, 2ID public affairs officer, Stars and Stripes 14 December, 2003, emphasis mine). 238 The rhetoric of health, safety, and security has always accompanied one another. When the issues of transnational prostitutes and human trafficking became controversial, the USFK warned U.S. soldiers stationed in Korea that "if found in the prostitution areas, you will have no protection of the U.S. government from being arrested by Korean police" (Hankyoreh 18 October 2002). All U.S. military personnel in Korea were ordered "not to go out from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m.," and several regions were designated as "off-limits" (Hankyoreh 19 October 2002). Indicating that the policy prohibited soldiers from entering any establishment promoting prostitution, purchasing sex, or permitting any form of human trafficking, and warning that punitive action might be taken against soldiers who violated this policy under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division stressed

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> The Board is comprised of senior leader within the division and Area I, and meets frequently to discuss safety issues (ibid.).

that it was to "ensure the *safety* and *well being* of its soldiers" (Maj. Tamara Parker, 2ID public affairs officer, <u>Stars and Stripes</u> 14 December, 2003).

Along with this policy, the Pentagon announced that a specific antiprostitution charge would be added to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, making conviction punishable by a one-year confinement and a dishonorable discharge (Stars and Stripes 24 September, 2004). The announcement interestingly corresponded to Korea's new policy on prostitution. On the same day (September 24, 2004), a new set of anti-prostitution laws intended to crack down on the sex industry was enacted in South Korea. Facing the change in regional policy of prostitution, the USKF commander, Gen. LaPorte, promised cooperation by forcing their troops to comply with it, emphasizing the U.S. zero-tolerance policy with regard to prostitution crimes (Stars and Stripes 8 November, 2004). In accordance with Korea's strong enforcement of the new law, cracking down on major brothels and arresting over five thousand prostitutes and clients in the first two months after the enactment, U.S. military officials said that they had been pushing their own campaign to stop GIs and civilians from involvement in the sex trade and human trafficking. The USFK declared over eight hundred bars and brothels as off-limits areas and sent out "courtesy patrols" to ensure these businesses were not being patronized by U.S. personnel (Stars and Stripes 2 March, 2005).

In reality, however, the new anti-prostitution regulation has not been effective among U.S. soldiers, as the military feared that "it would hurt recruiting" and "[soldiers] might well have chosen another profession if their off-duty recreation was heavy on prayer services and light on sin" (<u>Strategy Page</u> 19, November, 2004). With

a sense of deep regret among soldiers for "Sexual Paradise Lost," the USFK tried to provide soldiers "other distractions" such as educational programs, late night sports leagues, and more movies, as well as religious activities. However, they confessed that "it is a lot easier to keep whisky off warships than it is to keep young soldiers away from young women" (ibid.).

# 6.2.3. Reiterated Discourses of Soldiers' Health and Liberal Democracy

Objectives of the U.S. performance are in fact two-fold. On the one hand, by declaring places around the U.S. camps as fraught with dangers, the responsibility to make safe and healthy environments for U.S. soldiers is deftly handed over to the Korean government, which is required to take action to clean them up. On their arrival, U.S. soldiers and civilians are told to "take a friend along when traveling offpost," because Korea is full of "violent incidents" (Stars and Stripes 2 March, 2005). They are also asked to use caution about pharmacies that sell medications "that would not pass U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations" (ibid.). As such, the U.S. can maintain its official authority as a watchdog to check and monitor other nations, without actual responsibility. Even after South Korea was lifted from being a Tier 3 country, the U.S. emphasized the importance of continued monitoring.<sup>239</sup> This is apparent as U.S. President Bush successfully positioned American power as the only moral force to police and eradicate "evildoers," devoting nine paragraphs in a speech to the U.N on the issue of sex trafficking. "Victims" of trafficking, women from poor countries, should be "saved" through the use of U.S. "leverage" (interview with Rep.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>239</sup> South Korea was conceived, in 2003, as both "source and destination for women trafficked for sexual exploitation" (The 2003 Trafficking in Persons Report released in June by the Department of State).

Christopher Smith (R-New Jersey), <u>National Review</u> 2 March, 2003), because the U.S. government "will not be relying on host-nation laws" (<u>Stars and Stripes</u> 23 September, 2004).<sup>240</sup>

On the other hand, women's bodies were (re)situated as sources of crimes and insecurity. VD control over prostitutes becomes justified and U.S. soldiers' criminal activities or violence becomes acceptable. It is prostitutes, the dangerous seducers who put ("our") U.S. soldiers in danger, or who induce soldiers to commit crimes, who should be eradicated. It is prostitutes, potential disseminators of VD, who do harm to soldiers' health, who should be monitored and controlled. Soldiers are forced to avoid barber shops and massage parlors, since they often are "fronts for prostitution" (Stars and Stripes 2 March, 2005). Therefore, continued control over kijich'on bars and clubs including VD checks among prostitutes became legitimate to protect U.S. soldiers from potential harm. In fact, right after the events of September 11, 2001, the USFK recategorized clubs in *kijich'on*, distinguishing between "safe" and "dangerous" ones, depending on how they observed VD check regulation and how many emergency exits were equipped, putting several bars off-limits. A midnight curfew for personnel was put into effect at the same time (Durebang 2005, 22-23).241

An announcement, written under the heading of the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> ID and made public by a foreign prostitute working in Tongduch'ŏn, provides evidence that VD

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>240</sup> The statement was by Chares Abell, principal deputy undersecretary for defense for personnel and readiness, to the House Armed Services Committee during the issue forum on U.S. military's progress to combat trafficking and prostitution in September 2004 (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup> Except for Osan Air Base, there was no curfew at Yongsan Garrison and for soldiers stationed in the Pusan and Taegu areas. Soldiers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division had to have a liberty pass to leave post and a special pass called a "warrior pass" to stay out past midnight on weekdays and 1a.m. on weekends and holidays (Stars and Stripes 1 July, 2000).

checks among prostitutes are ongoing; "All clubs will have all entertainers and club employees present during inspection. Entertainers will have their passports, alien cards and health records present for verification of identity. Since entertainers are in close proximity to soldiers it is imperative that they can demonstrate that they are free of any communicable diseases" (Stars and Stripes 28 November, 2004). In response to this notice, one prostitute commented that "health inspections give the impression the Army is involved in management of prostitution in Area I, despite a high-profile anti-vice campaign this year" (ibid.). 242

Astonished by the news report, Maj. Mike Lawhorn, 2nd Infantry Division spokesman, argued at a news conference that "the 2<sup>nd</sup> ID does not conduct medical inspections of club workers, nor review employee medical records," and the health

<sup>12</sup> In 2006, it could be identif

< Table 3. U.S. Camptowns and Bases in South Korea in 2006>

Cities	Camps
Tongduch'ŏn	Camp Casey, Camp Castle, Camp Hovey, Camp Mobile,
	Camp Nimble
Ŭijŏngbu	Camp Essayons, Camp Jackson, Camp Kyle, Camp Red
	Cloud, Camp Sears, Camp Stanley
Hanam	Camp Colbern
Bup'ung	Camp Market
Area II Sungnam	K-16
	Tango
Seoul	Yongsan (Garrison)
Wonju	Camp Eagle, Camp Long
P'yŏngt'aek	Camp Huphreys
Suwon	Air Base
Area IV  Waegwan  Daegu  Busan	Camp Carroll
	Camp Henry, Camp Walker, Air Base
	Camp Hialeah
Gwangju	Air Base
Osan	Air Base
Kunsan	Air Base
Chinhae	Navy Base
	Tongduch'ŏn  Ŭijŏngbu  Hanam Bup'ung Sungnam  Seoul Wonju P'yŏngt'aek Suwon Waegwan Daegu Busan Gwangju Osan Kunsan

(Resource from the USFK, www.korea.army.mil in 2006)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup> In 2006, it could be identified that the USFK controls the main bases dividing seven areas in terms of geographical location. Ŭijŏngbu and Tongduch'ŏn are categorized as Area I, areas neighboring Seoul including Seoul itself as Area II, P'yŏngt'aek and Wŏnju as Area III, and bases in the Southern part of Korea including Daegu and Busan as Area IV.

checks do not amount to management of prostitution (The Pressroom of USFK, Information Center 3 December 2004). Army Col. Anthony R. Lerardi, the 2nd Infantry Division Chief of Staff, insisted that "these inspections are intended to preserve the health and safety of our soldiers and are not related to the issue of Human Trafficking & Prostitution."

It is obvious, however, that if there were no prostitution, entertainers would not be subject to these health inspections. It is not a secret that foreign women employed in clubs or bars in U.S. military camptowns receive regular health examinations, including an HIV test every three months, at designated clinics (Korea Church Women United Counseling Center for Migrant Women Workers 1999; Saeumto 2001b, 133), and Korean NGOs have been aware that VD medications have been distributed by the USFK to *kijich'on* prostitutes (KWAU 2002).

The hypocritical attitude of the U.S. military coincides with the rationale that "good" U.S. soldiers come to South Korea in order to protect the Korean people and "to protect democracy" from an "axis of evil" that includes North Korea, in the name of "world peace." As such, the position of the U.S. as a nation of "freedom," "justice," and "democracy" becomes differentiated from the "injustice" and "oppression" levied by "other" nations and "other" citizens. This trope justifies the perceived U.S. right to intervene in Korean policy under the name of universal human rights and democracy. In other words, with the references of Others (South or North Korea), the superior place of the Self (the U.S.) is reconfirmed. The differentiation of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup> He added that the division is absolutely committed to this zero-tolerance culture for activities that support human trafficking and prostitution, noting that "we are not tolerating anything that supports that" (ibid.).

These quoted phrases are actually used by some U.S. soldiers in Korea in interviews with a journal (Quoted in <u>The Time</u> 12 August, 2002).

"self" or "our nation" from "Other" nations is applicable to the international politics of the U.S. As Inderpal Grewal (1998) points out, positioning America as the site for the authoritative condemnation of practices conducted in/by the Third World has long been part of the U.S. government's political strategy. Such a strategy has not only functioned to consolidate the U.S. as the "land of freedom" whose representatives can stand in "judgment of the practice of other nation-states" (Grewal 1998, 511), but has also justified the expansion of U.S. imperial power to intervene in domestic policies of other nations. Accordingly, the U.S. government is concerned about the transnational traffic in women, this so-called "Third World women's issue," only because it fits into U.S. colonialist national narratives.

#### 6.3. Paradox of Koreans

The transformation of *kijich'on* not only reveals the discourse of U.S. imperialism and its hypocritical policies, but also Korea's racism, nationalism, and colonialism. This part examines how Korea's sexism, racism, and nationalism are inextricably linked in order to maintain *kijich'on* as reality and symbol despite its various changes in atmosphere.

## 6.3.1. Racism Interlocked with Gendered Ideology

From a Korean perspective, foreign prostitutes are conceived as, at best, "poor victims of sexual exploitation," and, at worst, "voluntary sex workers greedy for dollars" (Weekly Hankyoreh 27 March 1997, 64-68). Either way, they are treated as

mere sexual and material objects, in part as a result of racial bias.<sup>245</sup> Koreans do not pay attention to their working capabilities but to "physical attraction" (ibid.). Because of their assigned and embodied exotic otherness, foreign prostitutes are regarded as "lustful sex objects," born with "strong sexual desires" (MOGE 2003, 150), and treated as "overseas imports" or "cheap sexual labor" coming from "poor countries" (Mal Magazine May 1999). <sup>246</sup> Moreover, many Koreans believe that foreign prostitutes are necessary not only as reserve forces for Korea's sex industry but also as decoys to keep U.S. forces away from "our" "innocent" women. They are welcomed to serve as buffers between undesirable wants of GIs, protecting the more valued greater Korean society (Castro 2003, 20).

Alternatively, the primary reason that pimps/bar owners prefer Filipinas to Koreans is economic; Filipinas are paid \$ 400-500 a month, while Korean prostitutes are paid over \$1,500 a month. Filipinas' ability to communicate in English is as important as their willingness to accept lower wages, because this can tempt American soldiers into spending more money in camptowns (IOM 2002, 46). Moreover, as bar owners became aware that Filipina prostitutes were favored by many U.S. GIs as "submissive Asian women who are docile and small enough for lap dancing with proficiency in English" (Kim H 2003, 77), the demand for importing

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>245</sup> According to a research, Korean men seem to prefer Russian women to Filipinas based upon racial bias, e.g. white Russian women are deemed to be "clean," "active," "progressive," or "independent" (Ministry of Gender Equality (MOGE) 2003, 147-48).

The idea of overseas imports is sometimes linked to that of "foreign currency drain" (Baek 2000, 108). Many Koreans, including bar owners, think that the importation foreign prostitutes is inevitable to make up for a shortage of labor, but they are simultaneously concerned about currency drain. "I feel sorry that foreign prostitutes brining their pockets with the U.S. dollars and sending them to their countries of origin. You know, Filipinas usually have big families to support, so they are eager to come to Korea to earn dollars. They are wiring all their money to the Philippines instead of spending here" (interview with a motel owner in Tongduch'ŏn October 2004).

Russians are paid about \$460 a month and Filipinas about \$410 a month on average (MOGE 2003, 100).

them increased. <sup>248</sup> The president of KSTA (Korea Special Tourism Association), on a television show, asked the government to import foreign women not as "entertainers" but as "prostitutes" to reduce business costs (Baek 2000, 104).

Vulnerability is a hidden but significant factor in the demand for foreign prostitutes. Because of their unfamiliarity with Korean language, laws, and cultural environment, foreign prostitutes are more easily exploited, deceived, manipulated, and threatened by Korean employers, with practices such as hidden fees and forced savings that deprive them of contracted salaries, often making them into "indentured servants," or "sex slaves" (Castro 2003, 20). 249 Frequent physical as well as verbal abuse against foreign women has become a major problem as Korea's patriarchal perception of woman intertwines with racism. In fact, foreign prostitutes in kijich'on who experienced violence testify that 97.5 percent of violence is carried out by Koreans such as bar owners, customers, and managers; this reality differs from the general assumption that crimes against kijich'on prostitutes are mostly conducted by U.S. soldiers (MOGE 2003, 117). Further, it is very hard for women who are undocumented to escape abusive jobs, since they are subject to unwanted deportation as immigration violators. Even when their visas are still legally effective, they are considered criminals because they have violated the domestic prostitution law. As criminals, foreign prostitutes are liable to be fined and even held in detention centers until fines are paid (Durebang 2004, 57; IOM 2002, 47).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>248</sup> Some researchers have indicated that a prevalent sexual desire among soldiers for "submissive," "innocent," "naive," "small," and "exotic" Asian women caused the strong demand for foreign prostitutes in the U.S. military camptowns (Baek 2000, 110; Castro 2003, 20).

249 They are more exposed to intimidation into compliance with pressure to provide sexual services

than local Korean women (IOM 2002, 46).

#### 6.3.2. Nationalist Paradox

When the women in *kijich'on* changed from "ours" to "others," the discourses of human rights eclipse those of anti-militarism and anti-imperialism; subsequently Korean male activists lost their interest in kijich'on prostitutes. This shift resulted partly because these Korean men are aware that other Korean men, as clients, traders, or bar owners, are deeply involved in the trafficking of foreign women, and also because foreign sex workers cannot provide Korean nationalists with a rhetorical tool to criticize U.S. imperialism. Their indifferent attitude towards prostitutes changes, however, when crimes against Korean women are reported. For example, in June 2002, a U.S. armored tank ran over two Korean middle-school girls in the city of Yangju. This incident re-ignited the anti-U.S. movement throughout the nation, mobilizing hundreds of thousands of people in anti-U.S. rallies generally known as the peaceful candlelight demonstration, which lasted into the next year. Korean nationalists were eagerly interested in the case, since two of "our" "national" "pure" girls were "killed" by the U.S. imperialists (Kyŏnghyang Ilbo 13 June, 2006; Ohmynews 12 June, 2006; 1 January, 2003; 27 December, 2002; Dong-a Ilbo 31 December, 2002; 29 December, 2002). For them, the death of the girls, who rhetorically embody national dignity and the future of Korea, signified national collective suffering. They took on this issue as an opportunity to reform the unequal SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement).

Indeed, ethnocentric nationalism that enabled the critiques of U.S. militarism and imperialism has long been the dominant theoretical approach to military prostitution among Korea's NGOs (National Campaign 1999; 2002; 2003; Korea

Truth Commission 2002), as discussed in the previous chapter. Progressive social activists have criticized the U.S. troops stationed in Korea as symbols of national disgrace and barriers to unification of the two Koreas. These activists regard U.S. military camptowns as evidence of political domination by the U.S. and of the neocolonialist relationship between two nations. The crucial target of Korean nationalists' critique, therefore, has been the symbol of U.S. militarism and imperialism concerning "our" national sovereignty, e.g. SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement), not "others." <sup>250</sup>

The Korean media's response to the lawsuit filed by Filipina prostitutes typifies such underlying dimensions of Korea's nationalism, racism, and colonialism. When the lawsuit arose, the Korean media's attention focused merely on recovering national honor from this "international dishonor." The titles of newspaper articles, such as "Developed Nation/Underdeveloped Human Rights," "International Shame," "Possible Diplomatic Conflicts," and "Responsibility of Government to Control," all symbolize Korean nationalist anxiety concerning its reputation as a "developed," "democratic" country. Filipina prostitutes were depicted either as voluntary sex workers coming to Korea to earn money, or as helpless victims of sexual exploitation by U.S. soldiers (Hankyoreh 20 October 2002; Dong-a Ilbo 21 October 2002; MBC

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>250</sup> One of the main goals of nationalist activism is to revise the unequal agreement between the U.S. and Korean governments: the Mutual Defense Treaty signed by both Korean and U.S. governments in 1953 immediately after the Korean War and updated by the 1967 SOFA. Based upon this treaty, about 37,000 U.S. troops were stationed in Korea in 2001, Korean territory for U.S. bases has been provided indefinitely with no obligation on the part of the U.S. to pay for it, and U.S. soldiers have been able to avoid criminal prosecution for crimes, including violent crimes, committed against local people in Korea. According to the Korean National Assembly's report, U.S. military personnel have committed 50,086 crimes against Korean civilians since 1945. These include murders, brutal rapes and sexual abuse, arson, theft, smuggling, fraud, traffic offenses, and an outflow of PX merchandise on to a black market in U.S. goods. These crimes by U.S. military personnel are usually not brought to trial in local courts. In 1999, only 20 cases (3.56 percent) were handled in Korean courts out of 565 criminal cases involving U.S. military personnel (The Annual Report of the Korean National Assembly 2000).

News 21 October 2002; <u>Dong-a Weekly</u> 12 December 2002). For the media, national honor is a question of which masculine government controls women's bodies and sexuality.<sup>251</sup>

The depiction of Filipinas as "imported" "helpless" "victims" seems to soothe the public, by provoking sympathetic sentiments. However, an object of pity requiring protection can easily be resituated as that of danger to be controlled and supervised. In fact, the growing demand for foreign prostitutes in the sex industry is generally acknowledged as a sign of the growth of immoral and illegal practices within Korea, in conjunction with concerns about the public morality (Chosun Ilbo 2001; Korea Herald 2001 quoted in IOM 2002, 11). 252 The idea of degeneration through biological or psychological disease and contagion has often served to construct sexual, bodily, class, racial, and national boundaries in colonial discourse (McClintock 1995, 48). In this sense, Koreans' perception of foreign prostitutes, who should be both protected and controlled, legitimated the strengthening of particular national boundaries. Beneath the attitude of a benefactor who is willing to support the victimized poor women, the deceived and exploited, lies the logic of a continuous otherization, e.g., "my" nation can be acknowledged as "good" enough to be willing to "protect" "helpless" "other" women. As such, Korea can reclaim its authority to secure and control the women's bodies, which has safeguarded not only male sexual

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>251</sup> For example, one editor of a magazine argues that "what is clear from the lawsuit process so far, the Korean government did not play a key role to rescue and protect the victims of trafficking... Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism should be in charge of controlling and supervising the Filipinas" (Hankyoreh 21 31 October 2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>252</sup> For example, the Korean Center of Human Rights for Foreign Workers (2002) states, "the foreign women mostly engaging in the sex industry in Korea are severely exploited in terms of human rights" (emphasis mine). While reporting on the "real picture of the severely abused women," however, the organization reveals anxiety that "Korean people might be influenced by corrupted hedonism" (Korean Center of Human Rights for Foreign Workers 15 May 2002).

interests and practices, but also Korea's patriarchal interests to constitute and maintain *kijich'on*, leaving its complicity with U.S. imperialism out of the explicit discourse.

## 6.4. Growth, Achievements, and Limits of the Kijich'on Movement

## 6.4.1. Growth and Empowerment

Two feminist NGOs that have been involved in attempts to halt *kijich'on* prostitution, Durebang (My Sister's Place) and Saeumto (Sprouting Land), became visible and empowered in light of the public recognition of the *kijich'on* movement organizations as well as *kijich'on* prostitution. In time, they became stabile organizations thanks to the government financial assistance; and they built a strong coalition of several women NGOs; then coalition produced increasing number of policy papers, reports, and other documents regarding *kijich'on*.

The *kijich'on* movement, which Durebang and Saeumto represent, has had some significant success in bringing *kijich'on* prostitution and prostitutes into public consciousness. Beginning in the 1990s, the vigorous activism of the *kijich'on* movement has been featured to the press in conjunction with the increased public attention to *kijich'on*, particularly after the tragic death of Yun Kum Yi in 1992 (Kukmin Ilbo 17 May, 1995; Kyŏnghyang Ilbo 30 May, 1995; Chosun Ilbo 5
September, 1995; Segye Ilbo 19 September 1995; Hankyoreh 28 April, 1996; 20 June 1998; 24 February, 2003; 3 March, 2003; Kukmin Ilbo 8 June, 1998; Women's News 20 December, 2002; 2 May 2003; Dong-a Ilbo 20 December, 2003). The theoretical

scope of the *kijich'on* movement activism can be summarized as follows: first, to offer direct aid to those in need both psychologically and materially; second, to publicize the material conditions of women in *kijich'on*; third, to challenge existing patriarchal perceptions through a revisioning of *kijich'on* prostitution from personal to structural, systematic, and social; and fourth, to deconstruct the stereotypical image of *kijich'on* prostitutes as social pariahs as well as to reconstruct their identity as victims. <sup>253</sup> Specifically, they successfully replaced the terms of "fallen women," "trash," "Western princess (*yanggongju*)," or "Western whore (*yanggalbo*)" with "sex slaves," "deceived or exploited victims," "abused women," and/or "our poor sisters," which have now circulated sufficiently to become the settled archetypes of women in prostitution (Saeumto 1996; 1999; 2001b; 2001b; Durebang 1995; 2001; 2004; 2005).

In addition, the *kijich'on* movement and the prostitution movement converged, in tandem with the problematization of prostitution and human trafficking, in public discourse. Confronted with the increased presence of transnational prostitutes in *kijich'on* since the mid-1990s, Durebang and Saeumto have joined several other NGOs working with migrant workers in order to urge the Korean government to pay closer attention to the issues of transnational prostitutes and to implement preventive measures of trafficking as well as protective means to aid trafficking victims (Saeumto and Human Rights Solidarity for Woman and Migration in Korea 2001; KCWU 2002; Durebang 2003). In 2000, a series of fires occurred in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>253</sup> The theoretical scope of feminist understandings of prostitution ranges from "questioning androcentric patriarchal culture" to "revealing the exploitative sex industry" (Wŏn 2004, 42). With efforts to remove the social stigma attached to "prostituted" women, feminists have reconceptualized prostitution to equate women's oppression with slavery under patriarchy (Won 1999; Hansori 2003; Kim H. 2004; Chung 2003). This focus on the experiences of oppressed women, extends beyond the dichotomy of forced vs. voluntary, and has contributed to thinking about prostitutes as "victims of the system of gender discrimination," "victims of gender and sexual politics," and "victims of the sex industry" (Wŏn 2004, 36-44).

several brothels, which resulted in the deaths of many prostitutes. In response to these events, women's organizations became united under the leadership of the Hansori (One Voice), the umbrella organization of women's organizations engaged in the anti-prostitution movement, whose co-director was Yu Young Nim, head of Durebang, and staged huge protests against prostitution. Women activists of Durebang and Saeumto organized successive seminars addressing the plight of prostitutes and demonstrations on the street as well as conducted projects to publicize the issues of transnational prostitutes in *kijich'on* (KWAU 2002a; 2002b).

In the meantime, the U.S. report placing Korea in Tier 3 was released in July 2001; the Filipina lawsuit occurred in October 2001; and in 2004 feminist NGOs, under the leadership of the *kijich'on* movement, were successful in their pressure to pass a new anti-prostitution law. Kim Hyun Sun, director of Saeumto, played a bridge role between women NGOs and the Ministry of Gender and Equality to negotiate between NGOs aspirations and the administration's perspectives on prostitution (interview with Kim Hyun Sun in August 2005; interview with Cho Jin Kyung in October 2004).

The seemingly gender-friendly government could no longer ignore women NGOs' demand for a new anti-prostitution law. Despite the huge amount of economic profit produced by the sex industry, domestic as well as international pressure, including the pressure exercised by the U.S. over the Korean government, enabled the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>254</sup> Most significantly, a fire in Daemyung-dong, Kunsan in September 2000 ignited feminist anger and finally led to feminist coalition and unity. It was discovered that five victims were in confinement like slaves, struggling with violence and exploitation. See Chŏng (2003) for the detailed information regarding the incident.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup> The sex industry in South Korea, including legal entertainment associated with the sex trade, accounts for more than \$20 billion each year (<u>Stars and Stripes</u> 2 March 2005). If illegal ventures are considered, the estimate may be as high as \$100 billion (KICJP 2002).

implementation of the Anti-Prostitution Law in March 2004. <sup>256</sup> Ironically, hypocritical attitudes toward prostitution, e.g. "pretending not to be involved in prostitution," facilitated the quick passage of the bill by the National Assembly. As one leading activist confessed, feminist activists did not expect that "the bill would be passed so quickly and implemented within a year" (interview with Cho Jin Kyung in October, 2004; Yu Young Nim in October, 2004). It seems to be very hard for the (mostly male) members of the Assembly to obviously oppose the bill, because they are concerned about women's voting power and they do not want to be called "wrongdoers" toward the "victims" of prostitution.

6.4.2. Dilemmas of the *kijich'on* movement: Limited Perspectives and Reiterated Ideologies

The enactment of the law can be recognized as a feminist victory. Ironically, however, the limits and dilemmas of women's organizations became evident when the feminist victory was widely recognized in conjunction with the emergence of transnational prostitutes in *kijich'on*.

The implementation of the law seemed to result in the empowerment of women's organizations, but in reality, the law expanded the government's power over women's organizations. By implementing the law under the women's NGOs initiatives, the Korean government achieved two goals: to meet the U.S. standard

(3), the government can confiscate all proceeds and property earned through the illegal sex trade and at the same time, it should take charge of sex/gender education for civilians, victims, and criminals (Lee N. 2005, 42-43).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>256</sup> The Law is composed of two Acts, "Act on the Prevention of Prostitution and Protection of Victims Thereof" and "Act on the Punishment of Procuring Prostitution and Associated Acts." Significant differences with the existing law include (1) women who are forced to or involuntarily involved in prostitution would be categorized as victims to be rescued and protected; (2) anyone convicted of engaging in human trafficking for the sex trade requires a mandatory three-year prison sentence; and

regarding human trafficking, satisfying the U.S. call for government assistance for trafficking victims or for NGOs involved in assisting trafficking victims; and to satisfy NGO's request for attention to issues regarding the status of sex workers. While executing government-funded projects, particularly assisted by the Ministry of Gender Equality established in 2001, on the contrary, women's organizations were co-opted by the government and lost their original aspiration for an autonomous women's movement (Yun 2004, 66-67; Cho 2004, 52). The inclusion of feminist activist aspirations and perspectives within the state can contribute to "progressive legislative measures and policies for women," but only if accompanied by an increase in "lobbying from moderate feminist groups and grassroots pressure from radical feminist outside the state" (Bae 2004, 43). As some feminists have warned, however, legal reforms, without vigorous cultural reform, have not been sufficient to achieve women's equality (Cho 2000; quoted ibid., 44). Likewise, without radical change in patriarchal, militarist, and imperialist notions of, as well as practice toward, women legal changes cannot guarantee improvement in the lives of women in kijich'on.

In effect, despite the call by activists for complete change in the social conception of military prostitutes, the *kijich'on* movement retained a traditional understanding of acceptable female sexual behavior through the notion of "victimization." Because women in *kijich'on* have been isolated from Korean consciousness, living ghettoized lives removed from "normal" Korean society, visualization of women's daily plight including various forms of abuse, violence, and exploitation as tangible realities, and "conditions facing prostitutes in U.S. military camptowns" seemed most important and urgent (Saeumto 1996; 1999). The strategy

of victimization was necessary to explain why women in *kijich'on* "rarely venture into what they call 'normal' Korean society" and why they are suffering from a "severe sense of pariah status" (Moon, K. 1999, 313), and to redirect the social perception of *kijich'on* from personal problems, to social biases and systematic structures (Saeumto 1996; 1999; 2001b; 2001b; Durebang 1995; 2001). Women can be repositioned as innocent victims of severe material conditions by strategic interpellation, <sup>257</sup> which necessarily accompanies sympathetic sentimentalism. <sup>258</sup> For example, one of activists confessed after watching the documentary film *I and Awl*, which was made and screened by Durebang in 2004, "My heart aches. I felt pain and sorrow on hearing such disastrous experiences of cruel oppression and violence against our innocent sisters, victims of U.S. militarism. I burst into tears with them with such intolerable empathic feelings" (from a brochure of *I and Awl*).

It is understandable that innocence, enslaved status, and sexual abuse must be underscored in order to appeal to the public. It is also necessary to highlight women's stories of extreme deprivation, needing to support their impoverished families or victims of family abuse, in order to resituate *kijich'on* women as "appropriate victims" and to induce public sympathy (Saeumto 1995; 1996; 1999; Durebang 1999; 2003; 2004; 2005). Nonetheless, even if these images of poor, helpless, exploited victims enhanced the legitimacy of the claims of women organizations, this rhetoric also deprived the prostitutes themselves of agency. The essentialization of women as passive victims, ultimately, justifies and reiterates masculinist/patriarchal nationalist

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>257</sup> This term originates from Louis Althusser (1971), who discusses how subjects come into being through the ideological function of interpellation. Althusser posits that subjectivity is constituted and determined through acts of misconception that is called interpellation or hailing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>258</sup> Most common phrases used in documents, brochures, and data produced by the *kijich'on* movement are "our poor sisters," "victims of patriarchy, nation, militarism, or imperialism."

discourse concerning women: "Our" women should be protected by "our" brave warriors from "other" men, predators, exploiters, invaders, or colonizers. Further, when the discourse of victimization is coupled with morality, it may function to restigmatize women. In a personal interview, one counselor told me, "poor sisters now need to escape here, after recognizing prostitution as a shameful experience." If prostitutes are really innocent victims of sexual violence, why do they need to feel shameful for their behavior? If one considers this a shameful experience, to acknowledge women's voluntary consent is a prerequisite. Thus, to feminist NGOs of the anti-prostitution movement, prostitution is a form of sexual exploitation or patriarchal crime, and to the *kijich'on* movement, it is a crime specific to the U.S. military and the effects of U.S. imperialism. <sup>259</sup> Murders, brutal rapes and sexual abuse were highlighted with other crimes committed by U.S. soldiers including theft, smuggling, traffic offenses, and a black-market in U.S. goods (Kirk 1995, 12).

Following this logic, all forms of trafficking and transnational prostitution are inherently coerced and abusive and constitute violence against women, which must be eradicated. As targeting trafficking for prostitution becomes the principal agenda of anti-trafficking interventions, policies, and laws, Korean feminists began to address all events involving immigrant women with anti-trafficking and anti-prostitution discourses.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>259</sup> In general, feminist activists in the anti-prostitution movement have emphasized that prostitution equals "male violence," which can be defined as "violation of women's rights" (Cho J. 2003, 31), and because its inherent nature of trafficking (Kim H. 2002; 2003; Cho J. 2003, 56; Cho Y. 2003, 95), it is a "crime" causing serious physical as well as psychological symptoms in the "victims" (KWAU, 2002a, 69). Activists of the *kijich'on* movement added one component to it: crime against Korean women committed by the U.S. military personnel (Ahn 1995, 13-25; Cho 1995, 35; Kirk 1995, 12).

This is not to imply that there is anything inherently wrong with the NGOs' perspectives or to demean their efforts to help or support individual prostitutes. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with favoring one idea over others or focusing on one issue over others. The process may be necessary to make some tasks more manageable. Such simplification of ideas has been useful for NGOs that want to fit into state policy and be allowed into the state's governing circle. It has also been helpful for prostitutes in getting public recognition. However, it is problematic when the essentialized discourse of women's passivity is included in "official" discourses in conjunction with unquestioned patriarchal, nationalist, and imperialist assumptions of gender and sexuality. It is also problematic when alternative perspectives are systematically blocked, ignored, or emotionally resisted by institutionalized knowledge and settled discourse within a feminist arena. When there is an official frame or "master narrative," the complex dimensions of the varied causes of the issue are isolated, separated, and simplified without room for variation, overlap, or considerations of social contexts (Lerum 1999, 24-25). Among feminists and feminist NGOs, therefore, different perspectives on prostitution have simply not been permitted, other than the abolitionist view (Lee N. 2005; Shon 2004; Kim H. 2004).

Without the notion of "work" or "labor,"<sup>260</sup> it is very hard to understand transnational prostitutes' experiences in relation to other sexualized and gendered income-generating activities that women perform in patriarchal capitalistic societies across national borders.<sup>261</sup> One is apt to ignore questions of which complex

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>260</sup> When I visited one feminist organization in winter 2004, for example, and used the term "sex work," members of the NGO got angry with me. They expressed huge hostility against using the term "sex work," and then argued that "prostitution cannot be regarded as 'work."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>261</sup> For further discussion of the notion of work and sex to understand prostitution in Korea, see Lee,

conditions cause women's transnational displacement, differing positioning, and transnational labor movement. The diverse experiences of transnational prostitutes do not, except for the most abusive situations, garner attention or interest, which signals the current hegemonic discursive frameworks within the Korean public.

More seriously, feminist activists have to confront prostitutes' own act of resistance and the division among them. Because it is difficult to monitor diversified, pervasive, and underground forms of prostitution, such as those carried out in (sports) massage parlors, room-salons, karaokes, or hotels, visible brothels located in red-light districts (so-called prostitution or sex trafficking concentration areas) became the main target of suppression and "crack downs." Targeting "nine sex trafficking concentration areas" was the original plan for the Ministry of Gender Equality with the cooperation of women's organizations, as this would most easily demonstrate successful outcomes of the new law, making possible clams like "Korea's sex trafficking prevention policy has become world class" (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family 2005). In response, groups of prostitutes working in brothels performed hunger strikes in front of the National Assembly for several months beginning in December 2004 through 2005, arguing for "the right to live" and "the right to work" (Hankyoreh 10 October, 2004; Daily Sports 1 October, 2004), as briefly discussed in the introduction chapter. They expressed severe hostility towards feminist NGOs as well as the Ministry of Gender Equality, pointing out that "to demonstrate visible outcomes, feminist NGOs funded by the Ministry of Gender Equality and the police seem to be targeting women working in traditional brothels, who are most underprivileged, the lowest class among prostitutes. We need to work for a living. Do

Na Young (2005).

they have the right to stop us from working? For what?" (interview with a leader of the strikes in December 2004). Additionally, foreign "victims" with no legal alternatives cannot benefit from the new law. Once they report any crimes or violations, they are forced to leave the country; unlike other workers, they have no flexible period after their E-6 visa expires (Seoul Ilbo 13 September, 2005; Hankyoreh 25 March, 2005).

Lastly, as Durebang and Saeumto became leaders of the women's movement against prostitution, concentrating their activities on domestic prostitution and sex trafficking, paradoxically, they lost sight of the original aspiration of the *kijich'on* movement. In the process of building a coalition of women's organizations in the anti-prostitution movement to make the new law possible, the *kijich'on* movement had to blur the specificity of *kijich'on*. As such, the *kijich'on* movement's call for understanding the complex problems of Korean patriarchy and nationalism, the division of the nation, U.S. militarism and imperialism, and the domestic sex industry, which constitute the reality and symbol of *kijich'on*, became nullified. And the issues of *kijich'on* became as simplified as those of the domestic sex industry. Is it really possible for *kijich'on* to be eradicated with the shift of the domestic entertainment spheres? Can *kijich'on* be eliminated once prostitution is abolished? Or, can problems pertaining to *kijich'on* disappear once the U.S. military leaves? Nothing was questioned and could be answered in this regard.

It is time to reconsider Korean feminist basic assumptions of sex, gender, race, and labor and redirect their activism in a way to retain the radical feminist aspiration and resistance against patriarchy, military, nationalism, and imperialism

which in effect have constituted the allegory of woman as endless poor victim. It is also worth noting that military prostitutes' direct voices have been lessening in the public sphere as women's organizations' power has been increasing. If women activists in the *kijich'on* movement have been successful in hearing voices from the periphery and speaking for other others, it is the time to let them, *kijich'on* prostitutes, speak for themselves.<sup>262</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> One of the former military prostitutes and my informant, Kim Yŏn-ja, established and run an independent center in 2003, Hŭimang Nanum Center in Pyŏngt'aek. Making Korean traditional cookies for financial assistance for former prostitutes, she hopes the center will function to distribute the hopes for a better future to former *kijich'on* prostitutes and their Amerasian children, independent of the government and other movement organizations.

# Chapter 7: Conclusion: Towards Trans/National Feminist Politics

When I visited Ŭijŏngbu City, a U.S. camptown, in summer 2004, I was quite certain about what I wanted to do for my dissertation research. I was armed with various postcolonial theories that would help me listen to, talk with, and speak to camptown prostitutes— those Othered—in order to represent the lives of women "correctly." Surely, I thought, as a Korean feminist, that I should be able to represent the harsh every day realities of the *kijich'on* prostitutes and their experiences. I was ready to critique androcentric and Eurocentric ways of otherization by presenting my "authentic" representation of the vexed lives of the women.

My initial plan to write about and tell the stories of the *kijich'on* prostitutes and their experiences was overturned quickly when I realized that my presumed authentic insider status was, at best, a "fictional" one. I did not have a ready answer when a Russian prostitute asked me what it was that I wanted from her and other prostitutes. Furthermore, the stories that I heard from them were the "every day stuff" related to camptown life from finding a baby bed to locating a doctor who could perform an abortion. In the midst of these stories and doing things that I was asked to do, I came to a realization that the lives of *kijich'on* prostitutes were much more complex than those that I envisioned representing. I also had to confront that my need to tell their stories as "victims" was fraught with my own understanding of U.S. camptown and kijich'on prostitution. I did not want to undertake a study of different peoples, institutions, and cultures for the sake of "our" desire to understand

"them" better, nor did I want to homogenize them into a singular category of sympathetic victims of imperial militaristic patriarchy.

Thus, when faced with the "real" and "living," I decided to give up the project of making the experience of Others visible, embracing Scott's caution not to "reproduce the given ideological systems and its terms" (Scott 1999b, 82-83). My focus, since then, has shifted from investigating women's experiences into analyzing productions of the social, economic, and political reality of the *kijich'on* prostitution as complex, contradictory processes. As such, this dissertation does not attempt a rich/in-depth description of the lives of *kijich'on* prostitutes, research that remains to be done.

The central questions addressed in this dissertation are how/why camptown prostitution emerges, consolidates, and transforms; what the involvement of the nation states are in the process; and how Korean nationals, camptown prostitutes, and women's organizations function. Shaped by Japanese colonialism, U.S. military occupation, national division, and the Korean War, camptown prostitution has been historically constructed and reconstructed, rather than being deconstructed as situated in the complex web of dynamic power relations between/among nation-states, subjects, and NGOs.

The history of military prostitution started with Korea's subordination to Japan. The foundations of two major features of *kijich'on* lie in Japan's licensing of prostitution: red-light districts as a commercialized space with brothels and a government-controlled registration system with compulsory venereal disease examinations. Moreover, through its state-regulated system of prostitution, Imperial

Japan systematically, strategically, and collectively abused Korean women's sexuality as sexual objects of their soldiers, comfort women.

The U.S. military government in South Korea (1945-48) outlawed the licensed prostitution system in the name of liberal democracy and gender equality. However, regardless of the official U.S. stance, prostitution system for the U.S. military in Korea was encouraged with the remains of Japan's colonial infrastructures, and U.S. military camptowns were established in former Japanese military bases or facilities. Because Korean prostitutes were seen as conduits of VD, concerns about the health of U.S. soldiers led to the continued control over prostitution, through various controlling apparatuses, including VD councils, VD Control Section, regular VD examinations, issuance of certificates to prostitutes, and the operation of enlisted men's clubs inside military bases. As a result, legal prohibition of prostitution coexisted with a kind of regulated prostitution, ostensibly to protect the health of American soldiers. Therefore, the U.S. military policy to manage sexual needs of its troops who were separated from their families (e.g. families accompany soldiers to Germany, but not to Korea.), complicit with the Korean government, create, consolidate, and maintain camptowns in South Korea. As the Korean government began to conceptualize prostitution as a necessary means to entertain and thus retain foreign soldiers in the midst of an anticommunist war and, later, as a means of ensuring South Korea's national security during the cold war, the increased concentration of prostitutes within and around the Rest & Recreation facilities eventually developed into so-called "camptown prostitution." As such, the Korean government successfully ghettoized kijich 'on as buffering zones or walls blocking

Americans from entering Korean society and prohibiting normal Koreans from interacting with Americans, and laid the "problems" of camptown prostitution at the U.S. door.

On the other hand, when the Korea's democratization movement was at its peak in the mid-1980s resisting against the military regime, some women's groups, Christian women and student movement activists, came together to address the issues of camptown prostitution. The *kijich'on* movement successfully replaced the terms and notions of "fallen women," "trash," "Western princess (yanggongju)," or "Western whore (yanggalbo)" with "sex slaves," "deceived or exploited victims," "abused women," "sacrificial lambs" and/or "our poor sisters. However, the kijich'on movement was faced with an androcentric nationalism driven by anti-Americanism, which was arbitrarily utilizing camptown women's experience in the name of national pride and sovereignty. Once murdered by U.S. soldiers, the "dirty trash," yanggalbo (Western whore), who had never before belonged to the national community, became idolized as the "nation's soul" and national daughter. For Korean nationalists, a woman's body sexually violated by other nationals signified no less than a suffering nation and lack of sovereignty and independence for Korea as a nation. Therefore, kijich'on woman's body was utilized as evidence of the immoral, violent, and abusive imperial Other. These conflicts with Korean nationalism have the kijich'on movement to be more engaged in women's rights and domestic prostitution with recognition of the limitations of nationalist approaches to kijich'on problems. As such, Korean activists in kijich'on developed feminist consciousness.

As military prostitution was consolidated in specific geographical areas separated from ordinary residential areas and systematically organized as an integral part of national security and economic development, women in camptowns became increasingly subject to collective control, losing autonomy. In addition, in the process of Korea's national development and democratization, the status of women in kijich'on becomes increasingly downgraded, and as the activist voices of kijich'on women began to speak out for themselves, kijich'on women's voices became more faded. However, women in camptowns were neither helpless victims nor ignorant poor women. They were capable of agency to organize collective resistance against their stigmatized and pathologized identity such as carrier of venereal diseases, comfort woman, yellow toilet, Western whore (yanggalbo), Western princess (yanggongju), dirty trash, and/or parasite, even when these involved taking considerable risks. Developing diverse survival skills, including leading protests against discriminatory treatment and exploitation of U.S. soldiers, pimps, and Korean nationals, organizing self-reliance groups, and planning escape from the oppressive community and nation, women in camptowns have carved out spaces for themselves.

Since the mid-1990s, the *kijich'on* has confronted another significant change as foreign prostitutes as cheaper labor have replaced local Korean women.

Interestingly, when the women in U.S. camptowns change from "ours" to "others," the discourses of human rights eclipse those of militarism, nationalism, and imperialism that have led the anti-American movement among Korean civilians since the 1980s. Beside the growing presence of these foreign women, camptowns have faced "redeployment" of U.S. troops as part of a global review designed to produce a

more agile fighting force, which resulted in realignment of camptowns as well as relocation of prostitutes. I argue that although the politics of *kijich'on* seems to be changed on the surface, the U.S. rhetoric of *safety* as well as security of U.S. soldiers continues by (re)situating women's bodies as sources of crimes and insecurity. Korean nationalist paradox of racism intertwined with gender ideology against exotic Others, and Korean feminist presumption of sex, gender, race, and labor became more visible.

# **Implications for Trans/National Feminist Politics**

Navigating the conjuncture and disjuncture between prescription and practice of hegemonic powers associated with *kijich'on* prostitution, this dissertation proves that the *kijich'on* has never been fixed as a singular socio-political entity. It has been (is) shifting and is always under construction. It can only be temporally fixed within the circumstances of continued conflicts, clashes, negotiations, and reconciliations and between/among the nation-states, the Korean people, *kijich'on* prostitutes, and NGOs. In this regard, I argue that the theoretical framework of the trans/national is necessary to understand the politics of *kijich'on* prostitution, which indicates both connection and disconnection, as well as continuity and change pertaining to the *kijich'on* across time and space. It also refers to contingency as well as inevitability, contradiction as well as consensus, tension as well as reconciliation, and disjunction as well as conjunction between/among the key actors in re/de/constructing the *kijich'on*.

From the outset, the *kijich'on* has been transnational as it has interacted with international power dynamics and policies, transnational capitalism, subjects'

encountering others, and women's movements across national borders. But it is *trans/national* in that *kijich'on* prostitution is (has been) an outcome of the contradictory relationships between/among different nation-states, e.g., the colonial state of Japan, the U.S., and South Korea, and some ideas, ideologies, materials, and subjects pertaining to the *kijich'on* cannot cut across the national boundaries. In addition, the term signifies the *trans/formative* nature of the *kijich'on*. Regardless of the state reforms that were driven by the desire for foreign currency or insurance for the national security, the *kijich'on* has retained the fundamental structure of government-regulated prostitution while reiterating across time and space the attendant underlying ideologies of gender, sexuality, and nation.

Women subjects in the *kijich'on* are also *trans/national*. Their encounters with foreign soldiers represent *transgression* of the androcentric Korean society as well as Korea's ethnocentric nationalism. Their embodied hybridity interrupts Korean tradition by interlocking it with Western culture and signifies their positionality as belonging neither to Korea nor to America. Unlike the colonized male subject who had nothing but to give in or emphasize the rupture from his own origins, e.g., family, ethnicity, country, and culture, in order to prove the extent of his assimilation (Fanon 1967, 36), woman in *kijich'on* has kept her complex positionality located at the interstices of assimilation and the negation of her national/ethnic origins. That is evident in the way camptown prostitutes are labeled, neither coherently nor consistently. The *un-fixedness* of a *kijich'on* woman as one signifier (e.g., temptress, carrier of venereal diseases, *wianbu*, *yanggalbo*, *yanggongju*, personal ambassador,

dirty trash, imperial victim, sacrificial lamb, and/or poor sister) paradoxically reveals the ruptures between/among hegemonic power relationships.

Trans also implies the *trans/formative* conditions and identities of transnational prostitutes in the *kijich'on*, as crossing national and cultural boundaries. When they seek other opportunities for a better future, they confront the shifts in material condition, cultural identity, and legal status, which leads to the discrimination, maltreatment, and violence that, combined, represent the continuity of ideologies of gender, race, and nation across borders.

Trans also represents my concern and experience as a feminist researcher about how to encounter, to hear, and/or speak to *kijich'on* prostitutes. To encounter and listen to different women in terms of culture, nation, race, and class inevitably involves translation of cultural contexts, ideas, and languages. It is a process of *trans/lation*, because something is always "lost in translation," and the possibility of perfect translations should not be assumed in cross-cultural and cross-national communications.

The *trans/national*, most of all, leads to the exploration of possibility of the transnational women's movement. I have observed that the women's movement against camptown prostitution is neither homogenous nor static. Rather, it can be characterized, drawing on Bystydzienski and Sekhon (1999), "as fluid and amorphous, diverse and fragmented, sporadic, issue-oriented, and autonomous with several streams of ideological thought and varying strategies" (11). At times coopting the positions, policies, and procedures of the androcentric Korean national movement and the government, and at times maintaining an autonomous stance from

them, the *kijich' on* movement has continuously negotiated the conflicts between/among Christian aspiration, national sentiment, and gender politics. It has transformed to respond to or negotiate with the differing needs of kijich'on women, regional communities, other NGOs, and the nation-states, and at the same time, retained some unchangeable tenets of beliefs, principles, and/or practices.

The *kijich'on* movement, which has gone through Korea's dynamic political transition from dictatorship to democracy as well as from resistant nationalism to globalization, began to show the possibility of transnational feminist coalitions. Durebang in particular has been a central player in the East Asia-U.S.-Puerto Rico Women's Network against U.S. Militarism, which was formed in 1997 when forty women activists, policy-makers, teachers, and students from South Korea, Okinawa, mainland Japan, the Philippines, and the United States gathered in Okinawa to strategize together about the negative effects of the U.S. military on each country (Adler 2000, 66-68; Brochure of the Network, 2004; Durebang 2001, 11-12; 214-216). 263 Gwyn Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, American feminist scholars and activists, paved the way to building the alliance across national boundaries. Both have been involved in the issues of military prostitutes, addressing the effects of U.S. military presence in South Korea on the civilian population. They organized the international

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>263</sup> The second international meeting was held in Washington D.C. in 1998. In 2000, Puerto Rican women who opposed U.S. navy bombing training on the island of Vieques also joined. The 4<sup>th</sup> international meeting was held in Korea in 2002, and the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting was in the Philippines on November 2004, which I attended. The mission statement of the Network is "to promote, model, and protect genuine security by creating an international women's network of solidarity against militarism; and to strengthen our common consciousness and voice by sharing our experiences and making critical connections among militarism, imperialism, and systems of oppression and exploitation based on gender, race, class, and nation" in order to "envision a world of genuine security based on justice, respect for others across national boundaries, and economic planning based on local people's needs, especially the needs of women and children" (Brochure of the Network, 2004; Adler 2000, 68-69). Its activism focuses on "[a]ctivities of participating organizations, including the provision of services and support, public education and protest, research, lobbying, litigation, promoting alternative economic development, and networking" (ibid.).

tour for *kijich'on* women in 1994 and founded the Network in May 1997 (Kirk 1995; Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 1999). Acting on their desire for feminist coalition, they prompted Korean activists in the *kijich'on* movement to consider the importance of the connections and continuities "between national and international," as well as "domestic and foreign policy" (Kirk 1995, 14). The Network is not a membership organization, but collaboration among women activists from varied communities and nations in need of the continued diplomacy, negotiation, sincere engagement, and love, on which the possibility of transnational feminist politics is premised. For the ongoing negotiations with different culture, nation, race, class, perspective, and language, and a deep commitment to the community, in fact, activists strive to be *transminded*, in order to go beyond their presumptions or beliefs about others.

This dissertation thus contributes not only to an understanding of the ways of construction of camptown prostitution, but also to a provision of the possibility of its deconstruction through uncovering the contradictory processes of its re/construction. By understanding how and which complex power dynamics have been mediated in constructing the *kijich'on*, we may shift its positionality toward a better place, reconstitute it in a different way, and eventually deconstruct it. The theoretical conceptualization of trans/national, I believe, sheds light on a more complex theory of military prostitution and feminist radical theories of gender, race, and nation, as well as the transnational feminist critique. Kaplan and Grewal (1999) argue that transnational feminist critique needs the differential methodological imperative that brings together gender, political economy, the international division of labor, and a

critical understanding of the role of academic institutional production (357).<sup>264</sup> In this regard, my dissertation consequently contributes to the expansion of transnational feminist critique in that it analyzes the transnational patriarchal links of the military, power, culture, and capital as important reactionary interests against women and pursues the transnational women's coalition to resist against them, as utilizing gender as a *crucial* analytical category.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>264</sup> Kaplan and Grewal (1999) argue that transnational feminist practices attend to the ways in which forms of representation intersect with movements of labor and capital (relations between culture and capital), asymmetries of power, and complex constructions of agency (ibid.).

# Appendix

### **Questionnaires**

For a staff member in a women's organization of the kijich'on movement

- 1. Please tell me the history of your organization.
- 2. How did you get involved in the organization?
- 3. What are the internal relationships among people in the related movements and at different sites?
- 4. Which factors are more influential on the changes of organizational strategies and tactics?
- 5. How/when are linkages with other organizations generated and resolved?
- 6. What is (was) at stake within/outside the organization?

For a staff member in an organization of other social movements

- 1. Please tell me the history of your organization.
- 2. Please tell me the cause, leadership, activism, and subjects of your organization.
- 3. How did you get involved in the organization?
- 4. How is the relationship between your organization and women's organizations of the *kijich'on* movement?
- 5. Why/ how/when is the coalition with the *kijich'on* movement engendered or resolved?
- 6. What is the future plan of your organization?

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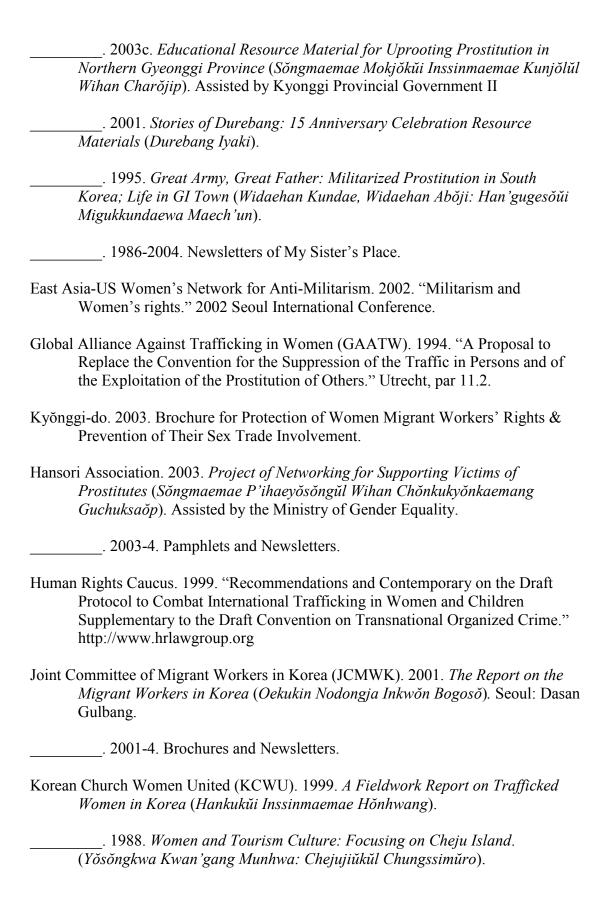
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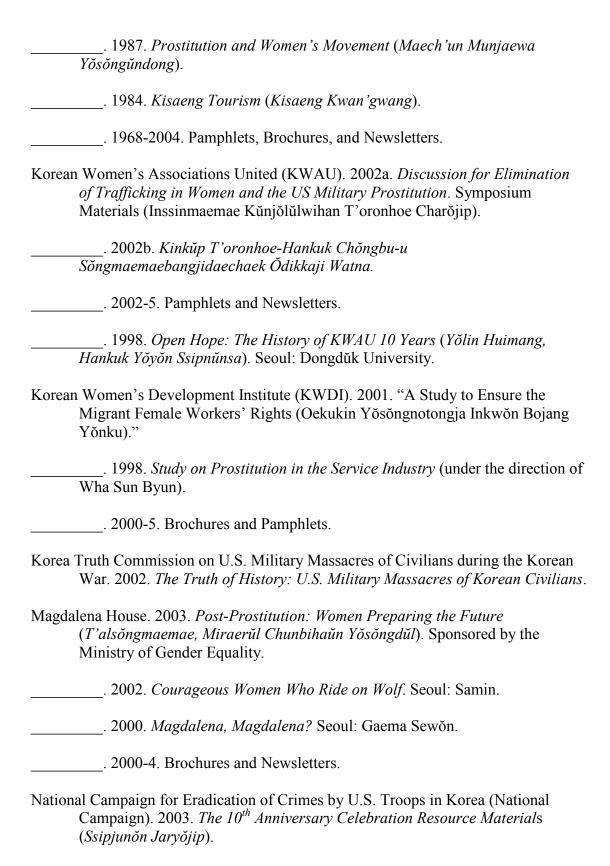
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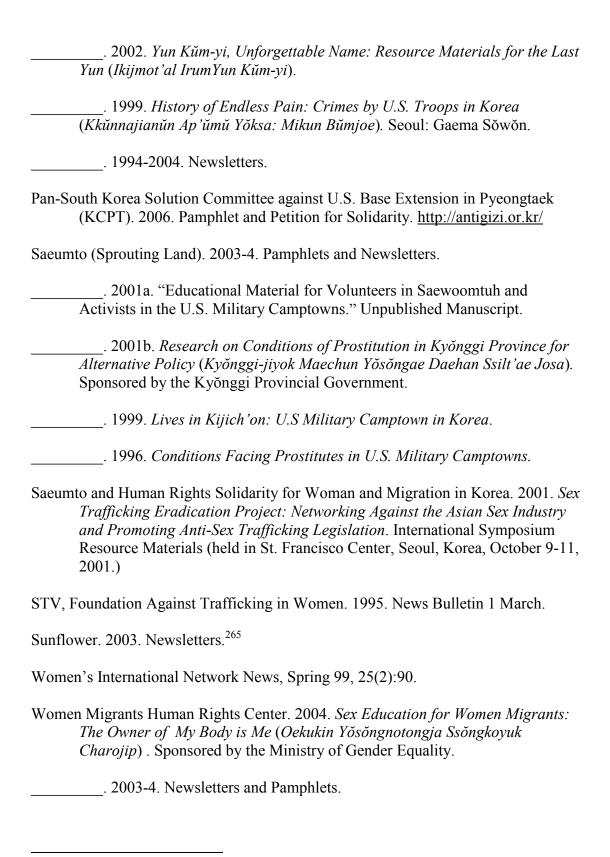
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Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW). 1999. "Prostitutes Work, But Do They Consent?" http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/catw Chong-Dae-Hyup. 2004. Testimony of Comfort Women 6. Seoul: Women and Human Rights (Yŏksarŭl Mandnŭn Iyaki 6: Ilbonkun Wianbu Jŭngŏnjip). Seoul: Yŏnsŏngkwa Inkwŏn. . 2003-4. Newsletters and Pamphlets. . 2002-4. Resource Materials. . 1999. The Past, Present, and Future of the Movement for Comfort Women. Educational Resource Material I. . 1992. Resource Material of Chongsindae II. Committee of Nogullri to Maehyangri (CNM). 2001. History of the Korean People's Movement for Solution of the Problems of U.S. Forces in Korea (Mikunmunjae Haekŏlŭl Wihan Hankuk Minjung Undong). Seoul: Kippun Chayu. Durebang (My Sister's Place). 2005. Educational Resource Material for Uprooting Prostitution (Sŏngmaemae Mokjŏkŭi Inssinmaemae Kunjŏlŭl Wihan Charŏjip). . 2004. Educational Resource Material for Uprooting Prostitution in Northern Kyŏnggi Province (Sŏngmaemae Mokjŏkŭi Inssinmaemae Kunjŏlŭl Wihan Charŏjip). . 2003-4. Pamphlets and Brochures. . 2003a. "Reports on Support Projects for Victimized Women in U.S Military Camptowns." . 2003b. Research on Amerasian Children in Kijich'on (Kijich'on Hŏnyŏlin Inkwŏn Ssiltae Chosa).







<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>265</sup> Sunflower is a counseling center for foreign women workers in KCWU (Korean Church Women United). It opened on May 1996 "based on the spirit of release from all differentiation and suppression" of "migrant female workers."

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# **Magazines and Newspapers**

Asia and Pacific Rim

European and Pacific Stars and Strips (Stars and Stripes)

Chosun Ilbo (Chosun Daily)

**Daily Sports** 

Dong-a Ilbo (Daily)

Dong-a Weekly

Hankyoreh Sinmun (Daily)

Hankyoreh Weekly

Han'guk Ilbo

Ilyosisa

Korea Herald

Kugmin Ilbo

Kyŏnghyang Ilbo

Los Angeles Times

Mal Magazine

Manila Times

National Review

Ohmynews

People's Daily

Puin Ilbo

Segye Ilbo

Seoul Ilbo

Sindong-a (Monthly)

Strategy Page

The Daily Tribune

The Manila Times

The Star

Time Asia

Washington Post

Weekly Hankyoreh 21 (Weekly Hankyoreh)

## **Films**

Camp Arirang. 1995. (Directed by Diana S. Lee and Grace Yoonkyung Lee)

The Women Outside: Korean Women and the U.S. Military. 1996. (Directed by J.T. Takagi and Hye Jung Park)

I and Owl. 2003. (Made by Durebang)

MBC. Documentary Series about Migrant Workers in Korea. 2002.

SBS. Shakers of Slavery Prostitution. 2002.

#### Web Sites

Civil Network for Peaceful Korea: http://www.peacekorea.org

Chong-Dae-Hyup: <a href="http://www.k-comfortwomen.com/">http://www.k-comfortwomen.com/</a>

Chosun Daily Newspaper: <a href="http://www.chosun.com">http://www.chosun.com</a>

Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia Pacific (CATW-AP): http://www.catw-ap.org/

Department of Foreign Affairs of Korea: http://www.moj.go.kr/immi

Donga Daily Newspaper: <a href="http://www.donga.com">http://www.donga.com</a>

Durebang: http://durebang.org

Global Security: http://www.globalsecurity.org

Hansori: <a href="http://www.han-sori.org/">http://www.han-sori.org/</a> (For uprooting prostitution)

Hankyoreh Newspaper: <a href="http://www.hani.or.kr">http://www.hani.or.kr</a>

International Organization for Migration (IOM). http://www.iom.ch/doc/trafficking

Joint Committee of Migrant Workers in Korea <a href="http://www.jcmk.org">http://www.jcmk.org</a>

KCWU (Korea Church Women United): <a href="http://www.kcwu.org">http://www.kcwu.org</a>

KNTO (Korea National Tourism Organization) http://www.knto.or.kr/gs/yh/gsyh\_av0.jsp

Korea Center of Human Rights for Foreign Workers: <a href="http://migrant114.org/">http://migrant114.org/</a>

KWAU (Korea Women's Associations United): http://www.women21.or.kr/

KWDI (Korean Women's Development Institute): <a href="http://kwdi.re.kr/">http://kwdi.re.kr/</a>

Magdalena House http://www.magdalenahouse.org/

Ministry of Gender Equality: <a href="http://www.moge.go.kr/">http://www.moge.go.kr/</a>

Ministry of Justice of Korea (Immigration Bureau): <a href="http://www.moj.go.kr/immi/">http://www.moj.go.kr/immi/</a>

National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by U.S. Troops in Korea: <a href="http://www.usacrime.or.kr/">http://www.usacrime.or.kr/</a>

Ohmynews (Internet News): http://www.ohmynews.com

Peace and Human Rights Network: <a href="http://www.onespark.or.kr/">http://www.onespark.or.kr/</a>

People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy: http://www.peoplepower21.org

SAFE: http://safe.jinbo.net/

Stars and Stripes: http://www.estripes.com/

Sunflower: <a href="http://www-sunflower.org/start.htm">http://www-sunflower.org/start.htm</a>

The Corean NGO Times: http://www.ngotimes. Net

USFK: www.korea.army.mil

U.S. Department of State: http://www.state.gov/

WAW (Women Against War) http://www.kwaw.org

Women Making Peace: http://www.peacewomen.or.kr/

Women Migrants Human Rights Center: http://www.wmigrant.org

Women News: http://www.womennews.co.kr.