



DANGEROUS WOMEN

Gender and Korean Nationalism

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Prostitute Bodies and Gendered States in U.S.-Korea Relations

Since the early 1980s, academics and activists have defined and analyzed military prostitution as an international system of political and economic domination, both of women and weaker nations.¹ The power disparities between nations, or governments, have been transferred onto women's bodies, namely that the women of the weaker state represent, through their prostituted bodies, the dominated and controlled position of the weaker state.

Such views, however compelling as a political metaphor, portray power relationships between governments and between men and women as static and universal. The simple fact is that the mere existence of power disparities between and among nations does not automatically translate into subordinated positions for women in a weaker country to

the men of a stronger country. The U.S. is more powerful in the conventional terms of military capability, economic capacity, and political influence than Italy; but American men, whether civilian or military, are in the habit of buying Italian leather, not Italian women. Even the fact of military conquest does not automatically mean the sexual conquest—through rape, prostitution or concubinage—of the women in the defeated country. For example, the U.S. occupation force in Japan, despite its development of local military prostitution, initially enforced strict rules regarding fraternization with local Japanese women.² And even weaker nations have been able to manipulate existing resources and interests of the stronger state to their benefit. Saudi Arabia, during the Gulf War, is a case in point. Saudi Arabia possessed weaker military and political capability than the United States to thwart Iraqi aggression. However, because of its primary role as gatekeeper of Middle East oil supplies and strategic location in the war with Iraq, the weaker power was clearly able to prevent the U.S. military from allowing sexual fraternization with local Saudi women. Moreover, not all women of a weaker nation experience or suffer the same plight at the hands of the stronger nation's men; class, region, race, religion, and ethnicity largely determine who is abused or exploited and how.

To understand how power relationships between nations or governments are shaped, we must pay close attention to individual actors and groups who may have varying interests, norms, and goals regarding gender. That is, the "state" or the "military" or "capitalist interests" are not monolithic entities. The U.S. military, for example, does not exhibit one universal norm or practice regarding sexual interaction with local women in overseas settings.³ Nor does it hold the same, constant view on strategic and organizational interests in different parts of the world. To continue to view different actors as conglomerates serves to politicize sexual and international affairs but takes the political process out of such interactions. Moreover, the perpetuation of a static dichotomy, in which the women of weaker nations are always oppressed and exploited by men of stronger nations, blurs our foci of analysis and activism. What exactly are we trying to explain or understand when we look at the relationship between governments and, consequently, the governments' policies toward women? With respect to U.S.-R.O.K. (Republic of

Korea) power relations and military prostitution, do we mean to explain the causes and characteristics of prostitution? Or are we aiming to assess the variations in prostitution practices among various military installations and in different time periods? Or do we focus on the kind and degree of poverty, social degradation, and "choice" confronting the individual women in the prostitution system?

The examination and understanding of military prostitution must be context-specific, grounded in an understanding of power as a dynamic and not a static zero-sum game. The challenge is to analyze the interstate context(s) that determine what Cynthia Enloe admits feminists know little about: "how bargains are struck between influential civilians in a garrison town and the local military commanders."⁴ This essay seeks to strengthen and refine feminist critiques of military prostitution as a matter of international politics. The questions I am asking are how and why governments use women and gendered ideology as instruments of foreign policy; how specific uses of women's sexual labor and gendered ideology affect women's lives; and whether participation as instruments of foreign policy politicize the women involved.

Joint U.S.-R.O.K. Camptown Clean-Up Campaign

Since the very first military maneuvers, women have been instrumental to the organization and operational effectiveness of soldiering men. Through their labor as cooks, laundresses, and sex mates, women have long helped to maintain armies. From 1971 to 1976, tens of thousands of Korean military (*kijich'on*) prostitutes had the distinct "honor" of serving not only in their prescribed role as appeasers of soldiers' sexual appetites but as patriots designated and actively enlisted by their national government to help promote the U.S.-R.O.K. security alliance through their cooperation in the joint U.S. Forces, Korea (USFK)-R.O.K. "Camptown Clean-Up Campaign," or what the Korean government called the "Camptown Purification Movement." Base-community conflicts—such as racial tensions between African-American soldiers and local Koreans, high rates of venereal disease among U.S. servicemen and Korean prostitutes, unsanitary conditions in the local R&R

establishments, and black-marketing—had been brewing in the camp-towns prior to the early 1970s. But in the summer of 1971, camptown problems took a turn for the worse. Racial violence between black and white soldiers and black soldiers and local Koreans occurred more frequently and intensified while venereal disease (VD) rates among the troops reached what the U.S. military considered “epidemic levels.”⁵ (The term STDs, or sexually transmitted diseases, was not yet in use.)

The Psychological Operations unit of the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) in Korea made the following assessment of Korean culpability in the racial incidents:

This [increased Korean] involvement [in racial confrontations] normally assumes three forms of progression. First, the Koreans aggravate racial problems [existing on post] by discriminatory practices. Second, they are often the injured party during black/white confrontations, suffering physical property damage. Third, they demonstrate, often violently, against U.S. troops in general and against the blacks in particular . . . Discriminatory practices by the Koreans are usually of a passive nature rather than one of violence. In the clubs, such practices include poor service, unfriendliness, and sometimes refusal to even serve black soldiers. Among business girls, such practices take on two forms. Some of the business girls refuse to associate with blacks. Some also discriminate against Koreans who do associate with blacks and consider those Koreans to be of lower status than those who go only with white soldier[s]. Polarization has developed to the point that some girls are called “black” because of their frequent association with blacks.”⁶

There is no doubt that many Korean prostitutes demonstrated prejudiced behavior toward African-American soldiers in the camptowns. In one sense, such behavior was a survival tactic. The women’s social stratification and self-identities within the camptowns were significantly influenced by the larger racial stratification among Americans. Women who fraternized with or sold sexual services to black men were themselves labelled “black” by Americans and Koreans, and such women faced severe social condemnation and stigmatization by others, including prostitutes who catered to white men. “Black prostitutes” and “white prostitutes” generally had to be careful not to cross the racial lines, for if a “white prostitute” fraternized with black soldiers, she might face phys-

ical abuse and/or economic boycott by white soldiers. The same fear of retribution (by black soldiers) applied to “black prostitutes” who fraternized with white men. It is important to note that U.S. military personnel have acknowledged that much of Koreans’ racist behavior toward blacks was learned from white soldiers stationed in Korea. In an *Overseas Weekly* article (August 4, 1971), white soldiers interviewed in Korea admitted that “Korean locals have been subjected to the attitudes of the white majority for so long that they practice discrimination without even being aware of what they’re doing.”

To solve these and other camptown problems that the USFK leadership deemed threatening to the order, discipline, morale, and military preparedness of its troops, the leadership pressured the Korean government to pay attention to camptown problems and cooperate in solving them. In the late summer of 1971, the U.S.-R.O.K. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) Joint Committee established the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Civil-Military Relations,⁷ which then organized numerous “panels” to address camptown issues. The Korean government set up a Blue House (the residence of the Korean president) committee, the Base-Community Clean-Up Committee (BCCUC), to direct “purification” plans. Through these committees, the USFK and the Korean government developed programs to help educate local Koreans and U.S. servicemen about the evils of racism and the prevention of VD transmission. Both the USFK leadership and the Korean government pressed local Korean authorities to encourage the clubs to prevent discriminatory behavior on the part of the club employees and to maintain sanitary standards designated by the USFK.

The Korean prostitutes, in particular, became targets of such “education” and “encouragement” because of their daily intimate contact with soldiers. Since they were viewed by the USFK as a main source of black-white tensions, the Joint Committee urged club owners and managers to train and instruct club hostesses “to refrain from engaging in discriminatory practices directed against customers of any particular race in the performance on club premises of entertainment functions such as dancing or conversing.”⁸ For example, at the request of the Commander of the Yongsan Garrison, the 24th Psychological Operations Detachment (PSYOP) of the Eighth Army created and dis-

tributed posters, flyers, coasters (for glasses), tape-recorded English lessons, and magazine articles which were designed to inform Koreans and Americans about racial issues. Many USFK commands urged the local Korean authorities to educate Korean prostitutes about respecting the human rights of black soldiers and creating an harmonious camptown environment. Ŭijŏngbu," for example, held "four meetings and five meetings respectively for regular club employees and 'business girls'" in 1972.

For the USFK, the issue was not simply dissuading Korean prostitutes from exercising racist behavior; they also saw the prostitutes' behavior as potentially damaging to the national security interests of the U.S. and R.O.K. Specifically, the USFK "educators" emphasized to the women that their discriminatory actions help fuel North Korean propaganda against the South and the U.S. military presence:¹⁰

It should be noted that the North Koreans seek to exploit and exacerbate racial tensions among U.S. servicemen and conduct anti-U.S. propaganda in order to distance the U.S. and the R.O.K. from each other. This, in effect, weakens the security of our country.¹¹

The USFK authorities also targeted Korean prostitutes as the main source, or "the reservoir," of venereal disease transmission among U.S. servicemen and, together with the Korean government, developed numerous programs to control the registration, VD examination, and quarantine (detention) of infected women. The Korean government's job was to enforce the registration, mandatory physical examination, and detention of *kijich'on* prostitutes in order to help reduce the spread of venereal disease to U.S. servicemen. The Korean Ministries of Health and Social Affairs (MoHSA), Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Home Affairs, Justice, and the National Police all expended considerable sums of money and energy to "clean up" these women. The Korean government allocated a total of 380 million *wŏn* in 1971–72 to improve health and sanitation in camptowns, of which 224 million *wŏn* (about \$1 million and \$600,000 respectively in 1971 terms) were earmarked for the prevention and treatment of VD among camptown women.¹² This money was used to build and renovate VD clinics and "educate" women about venereal disease. It also financed governmental enforcement actions such

as forced "round-ups" of women for examinations as well as "mass injections" of antibiotics to "innoculate" women against VD infection.

Throughout the Clean-Up Campaign, VD continued to be the Achilles' heel of improving camptown life and relations between the U.S. and Korean sides. Several USFK and Korean government officials I interviewed even noted that although the initial target of the campaign was improving camptown race relations, control of prostitutes and reduction of VD rates for U.S. troops consistently remained the major grievance for the USFK and the primary focus of work for the Korean government. One USFK Community Relations Officer commented that racial unrest was merely the "spark" that ignited the clean-up activity and that control of prostitution and VD constituted the crux. He also mentioned that in his opinion, given the emphasis placed on VD control, the R.O.K.G. should have called the clean-up campaign "*Kukka sŏngbyŏng jŏnghwa undong*" ("National VD Purification Movement"), instead of the generic "Camptown Purification Movement."¹³ Although the Korean government did pay attention to other aspects of the base-community life, such as paving roads, its primary aim was to control the women's sexual health and general behavior as a way to appease U.S. servicemen. Accordingly, curbing venereal disease was the first item on the respective comprehensive clean-up agendas of the BCCUC and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Health.¹⁴

The Role of Prostitute Women in Foreign Policy Adoption

Social disorder, racial conflicts, violence, and crime were common problems experienced by generations of U.S. soldiers and local Korean residents. Why, then, did the U.S. military and the R.O.K. government exert so much effort to improve camptown relations in the 1970s?

Some critics of U.S. military bases in Korea have tended to view *kijich'on* prostitution primarily as a result of U.S. militarism and imperialism.¹⁵ Without necessarily defining the meanings of these terms, such analysts have equated the superior economic, military, and political capabilities of the U.S. with domination, and domination with militarism and imperialism. Such views cannot explain why the Korean govern-

ment's active role in controlling prostitution in the early 1970s contrasted so starkly with its negligence and intransigence toward any U.S. requests to address camptown problems prior to 1971. USFK documents from the early 1960s reveal that VD was a serious problem and concern for the military commanders and that they tried, to no avail, to push the Korean government into cracking down on VD among *kijich'on* prostitutes. Lieutenant General T.W. Dunn, Commander of I Corps (Group), complained to the then Commanding General, Hamilton Howze, "I am convinced that we receive mostly words and bows and little practical help" regarding the "deplorable problems" related to prostitution.¹⁶ Even three years before the Clean-Up Campaign, U.S. officials involved with camptown relations lamented the Korean authorities' lack of cooperation in controlling prostitution and prostitutes: "[T]here was a natural impatience . . . [on the American side] with a strong Korean reluctance to do anything constructive about the problems of most concern to the Americans, prostitution and venereal disease."¹⁷

The fact of U.S. superiority and "dominance" in economic, military, and political capabilities vis-à-vis Korea did not change from the 1950s and 1960s to the 1970s; the U.S. was still the "dominant" partner and Korea the "junior" partner in the alliance. U.S. troop presence in the 1960s, for example, stood at about 60,000 (compared to approximately 40,000 by September 1971), and the U.S. effectively had command over the Korean military through its role as head of the United Nations forces in Korea. But such power did not enable the Americans to force the Korean government to focus on problems related to prostitution or the Korean prostitutes who densely populated the areas around U.S. bases. In 1963, a USFK official admitted to the EUSA Deputy Chief of Staff that the USFK was powerless to control prostitution and venereal disease: "Our negotiating position appears to be weak, for we have no lever to force the R.O.K. to improve their efforts."¹⁸ Not only was the USFK leadership in the early 1960s unable to use its large and potent military presence as leverage to pressure the Koreans, it even exhibited awareness and concern for the political implications, i.e., sensitivity toward issues of Korean sovereignty, of official meddling by the U.S. in local camptown issues, primarily prostitution. A Major Saalberg, an Eighth Army official in 1963, stated with regard to prostitution control

that "[t]he United Nations Command has followed a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the host nation."¹⁹

According to some of the women who worked as camptown prostitutes during the 1950s and 1960s, prostitutes of that time period were much "freer," "wilder," "bolder," and less controllable by U.S. or Korean authorities than the women of the 1970s and 1980s. They claimed that each woman's survival depended on her own tough handling of any problems she encountered because no part of the larger society could be counted on to protect her. Moreover, these women had not yet been "tamed" by strict regulations enforced by the U.S. military or Korean authorities. And in general, the "wild" behavior of the earlier generation of prostitutes reflected the unruliness and lawlessness of camptowns themselves, resulting from the Korean government's *laissez-faire* attitude toward *kijich'on* life. Some of the women went so far as to say that the police not only left them alone but feared them. Why did the overwhelming power disparity between the R.O.K.G. and the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s not translate into overwhelming physical and sexual control and domination of Korean camptown prostitutes by U.S. soldiers?

We can begin to understand the changes in the attitudes and actions of both the USFK and the R.O.K. government if we view their interactions as part of a dynamic in which domination is relative rather than absolute. The exploitation and oppression of women are functions of the particular power dynamic between two countries. This dynamic may enable the patron to dominate the relationship, but it may also enable the client state to steer the relationship in its favor. In the 1950s and 1960s, at least two significant factors swung the power pendulum in South Korea's favor and served as a source of resistance to U.S. demands regarding camptown life: clear U.S. geostrategic interests and alliance commitments that compromised U.S. leverage.

From the Korean government's perspective, clear-cut Cold War rivalries of the 1950s and 1960s, with Asia serving as the major battlefield, meant firm U.S. commitments to non-Communist Asian allies and a large U.S. troop presence to back up those commitments. The strength of these commitments assured the R.O.K. that the U.S. had as much to gain from a free and prosperous Korea as the Koreans

themselves. This meant that the R.O.K., though a junior alliance partner, had considerable freedom and leeway in its relations with the U.S.²⁰ With respect to camptown prostitution, the Korean government used the certainty of U.S. commitments to non-Communist Asia as reason to largely ignore USFK pleas for control of the health and behavior of the prostitutes. The Korean government considered camptown prostitution primarily a U.S. problem and a matter between GI and prostitute, not, as in the 1970s, a matter of state-to-state relations and security affairs.

Moreover, the general attitude of the Korean government and public toward these women during these two immediate postwar decades was "They're poor, like most of us who have survived the war. Let them make a living whatever way they can."²¹ In other words, although most Koreans morally condemned these women for selling their flesh to foreigners, they pitied and sympathized with the women's poverty and their struggle to keep themselves and their families alive. In a way, these women's material needs were recognized more during the early postwar years than in the 1970s and 1980s, when Korea became economically and militarily much stronger.

Second, the unrelenting demand in the 1970s by the USFK for the cooperation of the Seoul government in controlling camptown prostitutes was a result of the loss of Korean leverage. This leverage had been provided by Korea's troop contribution of 50,000 to aid the U.S. war effort in Vietnam in the mid- to late 1960s. As long as Washington needed Korean troops to supplement U.S. forces in Vietnam, as well as the moral support of its ally, the power of the U.S. to dominate the alliance with Korea was significantly compromised. The U.S. had to accommodate some of Seoul's demands regarding the conditions for troop contribution to Vietnam and the terms of the U.S.-R.O.K. security relationship.²² The Korean troop contribution to Vietnam strengthened the Korean government's ability to resist or downplay the demands and complaints of the USFK authorities regarding camptown issues. U.S. officials involved in the Camptown Clean-Up during the early 1970s admitted that as long as Korean troops were needed in Vietnam, the U.S. could not push its interests in cleaning up the camptowns.²³ It was with the reduction and withdrawal of R.O.K. troops

from Vietnam in the early 1970s that the U.S. officials in Korea were able to gain the upper hand on camptown issues.

The Nixon Doctrine, which signaled the United States' disengagement from Vietnam and Asian land wars in general, and the consequent reduction of U.S. troops from Asia provided the opportune moment for the USFK to demand camptown improvements and for the Seoul government to oblige.

A specific disruption in the secure U.S.-R.O.K. alliance, then, drove the USFK leadership and the R.O.K. government, through the Purification Campaign, to tighten joint control over the bodies and conduct of camptown prostitutes. For the USFK, the Clean-Up efforts were a means to defend its organizational interests vis-à-vis the policy-makers in Washington and a symbol of its commitment to remain in Korea, regardless of Washington's policy statements. For the Korean government, the clean-up was an integral part of "private diplomacy," a desperate resort to the use of local people and resources, in the absence of conventional carrots and sticks, to secure U.S. commitments to Korea.

The application of the Nixon Doctrine to South Korea amounted to the reduction of 20,000 U.S. troops (approximately 60,000 troops had been stationed in Korea throughout the 1960s) from Korea and highlighted the uncertain future of the U.S. forces stationed there. During the early 1970s, the USFK leadership had good reason to feel insecure. Members of Congress were unabashedly expressing their skepticism about a continued U.S. military presence in Korea. Congressman Ronald Dellums, a newly elected African-American, severely criticized the Korean government and people's treatment of black servicemen in Korea and questioned the need to aid militarily countries where Americans, i.e., black soldiers, were not welcome.²⁴ Given this context, the Clean-Up Campaign was a way for U.S. military authorities in Korea to demonstrate the strength and congeniality of its relationship with Koreans as well as a means to maintain U.S. congressional support of its continued presence in Korea and continued military assistance for the R.O.K. government. It was, in short, an intense and comprehensive public relations effort. According to one of the main U.S. initiators of the Clean-Up,

[it] was an opportunity for the U.S. military in Korea to put a good face on their presence in Korea . . . For the USFK, the stake in this was that it wanted to show people in Washington that we have good relations, that nothing is wrong in Korea. The military in Korea did not want to leave Korea.²⁵

The Clean-Up Campaign not only assuaged critics in the U.S. but also addressed skeptics in the Korean government who were wary of the sincerity of the U.S. commitment to Korean security. Again, in the words of the main U.S. initiator,

The Koreans were feeling at the time [of the troop reductions] that it's all over for them if the U.S. leaves. So, we made it clear to the Koreans through the clean-up activities that we wanted to stay.²⁶

Indeed, the R.O.K. government reacted to the departure of the U.S. 7th Division (one of the two army divisions that had been in Korea since 1955) and three Air Force squadrons with shock and panic. The *Korea Herald* reported on July 1, 1971 that the "20,000-man U.S. troop withdrawal was first regarded as a bolt from the blue sky." The *Far Eastern Economic Review* characterized the Seoul government's opposition to the withdrawal as "violent."²⁷ Major sectors of the Korean society—government, military, legislature, media, and the general public—opposed the U.S. cut as sudden, hasty, and provocative (of North Korean reaction). Even opposition members of the National Assembly joined the mass protest. Koreans "expressed the fear that the new attitude in America really means that the United States will abandon Korea."²⁸ By demonstrating its desire to improve camptown life, then, the U.S. military aimed to prove to Koreans how much it cared about Korean-American friendship, cooperation, and cohabitation.

From the Korean government's perspective, the women were instrumental to improving the daily life of U.S. soldiers stationed in Korea and in meeting the demands of the USFK for increased camptown control. Then President Park Chung Hee made the U.S. soldiers' quality of life a priority in U.S.-Korea relations. Although he was fully aware of the complex set of international and domestic factors that led the U.S.

to reduce its military commitments to Asia, Park became convinced that, given the "special relationship" Korea had long enjoyed with the U.S., negative "people-to-people relations" were at fault for the United States' change of heart. Park and his aides diagnosed Korea's problem with the U.S. as bad public relations and a negative image of Korea and Koreans held by U.S. soldiers, the Congress, and the American public.²⁹ To remedy this situation, the Korean government waged an aggressive campaign of "people-to-people relations" to supplement what it considered its weak and ineffective public channels of influencing U.S. policy circles.

Camptowns, in particular, were viewed by Korean officials and the Korean public to be responsible for such "negative images" of Korea. All the Korean officials (whether working for the USFK or the R.O.K. government) I interviewed repeated that the Korean government and society were always concerned that GIs were getting a distorted and erroneous impression of Korea through their interactions with the Korean nationals in camptowns, i.e., prostitutes, pimps, drug dealers, and other social pariahs. The Political Secretary overseeing the "Purification Campaign" under President Park's orders mentioned that the Blue House feared that because all that U.S. soldiers witnessed during their stay was *kkang'i'ong-hwa*, or "culture of tin cans,"³⁰ around their bases, these same individuals would return to the U.S. with an image of Korea as populated solely with poor, thieving people, grovelling for U.S. dollars and lacking in national culture and pride. This image, in turn, would unfavorably inform Washington's political decisions regarding Korea.³¹

The work of the Korean government in the Clean-Up effort was intended to "correct" the image of Korea in the eyes of U.S. servicemen. The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs official who oversaw the various prostitution and VD control programs in 1971–72 stated clearly that the purpose of the control effort was "to give a cleaner impression of camptowns and of Korea." He emphasized that the "Purification Campaign" was not intended for the entire nation but solely for U.S. camp areas, especially those with large concentrations of troops.³² Another medical official of MoHSA stated that only camptown prostitutes, not Korean prostitutes in general, were regularly examined and quarantined for VD infection (in the beginning of the campaign).³³

Without doubt, not only the government, but the Korean people regarded camptown VD as *such'i byōng*, or "disease of shame."³⁴

From the perspective of the Korean government, the camptown prostitute was in a position to play "personal ambassador" to the numerous GIs she sexually contacted, and the task of the "Purification Movement" was to transform her from a bad ambassador to a good one. The Blue House secretary who oversaw the R.O.K.'s "purification" programs stressed that camptown prostitutes needed to be taught how to work correctly. In his interview, he recounted his visits to camptown areas, where he asked the women, "Why did Japan develop from nothing to greatness?" He answered for them by admonishing them to imitate the spirit of Japanese prostitutes who sold their bodies to the post-1945 U.S. occupation forces:

The Japanese prostitute, when she finished with the GI, did not get up to go get the next GI (for more money) but knelt before him and pleaded with him to help rebuild Japan. The spirit of the Japanese prostitute spread to the rest of the society to develop Japan.³⁵

Such a view clearly established camptown prostitutes' sex work as a vital form of patriotism, and lower-level Korean officials echoed such words in their regular "educational lectures" to the women. For example, women were urged during such classes in the Ŭijōngbu area to "take charge of national prestige" (*Kugwiril damdang hara*).³⁶ One former camptown prostitute who worked in Tongduch'ōn and Songt'an (respectively, the major camptowns for the 2nd ID and the Osan Air Base) in the first half of the 1970s recalled:

During every "Etiquette and Good Conduct Lecture" [sponsored monthly by local Korean officials], the local mayor or local public information officer or public peace officer would . . . give the introductory remarks. They would say, "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." They said that we are servants of the nation and that we should live and work with pride. And then they told us not to show humiliating things [behavior] to the U.S. soldiers, to maintain our dignity as Korean women.³⁷

The control of camptown women's bodies and sexual health was integral to improving deteriorated USFK-R.O.K. relations in the early 1970s. Just as the Clean-Up Campaign in general helped mitigate tensions between the USFK and the R.O.K. government, the Subcommittee found that those camptowns which addressed the VD problem to the satisfaction of the local U.S. command leaders possessed a "spirit of mutual cooperation . . . between the Base Command and local Korean officials" and had "excellent" civil-military relations.³⁸

The insecurity of Korea that ensued from the Nixon Doctrine and the withdrawal of 20,000 U.S. soldiers linked private individuals and personal conduct to public priorities, namely, the defense and security of the Republic of Korea. Like Pak Tong Sōn and other "unofficial ambassadors" of "Koreagate" fame in the 1970s, camptown prostitutes were deployed by the R.O.K. government to transform the image of Korea in the eyes and minds of Americans: the target audience of the former was the power elite in the United States while that of the latter was the GIs in Korea. Both channels of "private diplomacy" were intended to secure the continued presence of U.S. troops in and the flow of U.S. military aid to Korea.

Gendered Roles and Policies in U.S.-Korea Relations

Power disparities and domination alone, then, do not absolutely prescribe the actions of the patron state and the client toward each other or toward the client's women. But that is not to say that power disparities and domination are completely relative. The obvious disparity in capacity to affect the relationship provides the patron with opportunities and responsibilities for dictating the structural boundaries of the relationship and constrains the client's influence on those boundaries while loading it with the burden of observing the limits.³⁹

With respect to U.S.-R.O.K. relations, the United States held the role of the protector, with the opportunity and responsibility for setting geopolitical policies, and South Korea was placed in the role of the protected, with no choice in geostrategic matters but to accommodate itself to U.S. initiatives, given the lack of viable alternative alliance partners

and the ever-present Northern threat. To force a change of U.S. policy or to threaten retaliation for such unilateral decision-making as the 1970s troop reduction, the R.O.K. would have had to possess significant economic, military, and/or political resources (including influence over U.S. and world opinion or a "united front" with other Asian governments opposing the Nixon Doctrine). But the only relevant "resource" Seoul possessed during this period was its troop contribution to Vietnam, and even this form of leverage was contingent on U.S. actions and lost its efficacy when U.S. foreign policy toward Vietnam changed.

Although the Seoul government and the USFK leadership, faced with a U.S. Congress that was critical and impatient, had mutual interests in cooperating to keep as large a U.S. troop presence in Korea as possible, such cooperation was not free of coercion on the part of the USFK. The U.S.'s dominance in the bilateral alliance, as manifested in its ability to dictate new terms of the security relationship, empowered the U.S. military in Korea to make demands on the Korean government and local camptown businesses. The vulnerability of the Seoul government to policy changes in Washington and its dependence, not only militarily but psychologically, on the U.S. troop presence strengthened the hand of the USFK leadership bent on imposing law and order in camptowns. They used the reality of the troop reduction and the threat of a total withdrawal in the near future to pressure the Koreans into controlling prostitutes' conduct toward U.S. soldiers and curbing the spread of venereal disease. Joint governmental "cooperation" on base-community issues, then, was a function not only of the compatibility of the USFK's organizational interests and the R.O.K.'s security interests, as mentioned earlier, but also of the USFK's successful employment of threats and coercive actions.

Power disparities among nations do appear to possess gendered characteristics in the sense that the stronger power has access to a large and diverse availability of public, "overt," resources (economic weight, military power, diplomatic influence), relative to those available to client states. The weaker power is positioned in the feminine role of resorting to domestic, "covert" and "personal" resources, including its female citizens, as instruments of power in its relationship with the patron state. Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr include in their definition of "covert"

resources a state's ability to mobilize its domestic society to meet security goals, the capacity of a people to endure physical suffering and economic deprivation, and the willingness of a people to sacrifice private interests and privileges for the collective good.⁴⁰ As mentioned earlier, in the early to mid-1970s, the R.O.K.'s conventional, public tools of security policy were limited in kind, number, and efficacy. However, its unconventional, "covert" resources were not. To supplement its public diplomacy, the R.O.K. enlisted private individuals, including camptown prostitutes, in a massive public relations campaign to sell its security cause to the U.S. Congress, American public, and USFK personnel. Though the R.O.K. was constrained by U.S. domination, it made specific choices, including the use of camptown women, as means to an end. USFK's demands for law and order in camptowns could have generated a debate between the Koreans and Americans about eliminating such prostitution, but the Korean government determined the prostitutes to be the source of and solution to camptown problems rather than considering other ways to meet USFK demands.

When we consider the gendered nature of power disparities and domination in international politics, we often cite the masculine and feminine gender stereotypes attributed, respectively, to colonizers and colonized on the basis of racial hierarchy, especially the West in relation to the East.⁴¹ What we often do not probe are the ways in which actual power disparities generate government policies that have gendered consequences. My point here is that between legally sovereign states, the weaker is not merely a passive recipient of the actions of the stronger. Consequently, exploitation of the women of a weaker state is not automatic or constant. Strong and weak states alike make calculated choices regarding women's roles and values in society at a given time. To attribute the exploitation and abuse of women to the weakness and passivity, or feminization, of a client state is to exempt that state from taking responsibility for its actions toward and regarding women. It strips the weaker state of agency and over-emphasizes the role of the stronger state.

The Korean government's use of private individuals, particularly women, and sexual relationships as instruments of foreign policy was made possible by a culture that expected and legitimated women's self-sacrifice for family and country. Confucianist values of self-sacrifice for

the good of the family and country fit handily into the Park government's scheme of women's roles in national economic development and security enhancement. Korean history, folklore, and literature are replete with variations on this basic scheme: girls and women who sacrifice their labor, lives, bodies and personal aspirations for the sake of their family and country are heroines, martyrs, and patriots.⁴² In the 1960s and 1970s, women formed the backbone of the low-skilled, low-wage, light-manufacturing export industry that launched South Korea's economic "miracle."⁴³ On the security front, thousands of poor girls and women from the countryside put their bodies to work selling sex to U.S. soldiers, increasing Korea's foreign exchange earnings from the dollars spent by the men and contributing to security by "providing comfort" to them. In the early to mid-1970s, such women were "lauded" by the R.O.K. as "patriots."⁴⁴

Additionally, South Korea's authoritarian practices, justified as national security requirements by the Park regime, contributed to the use and abuse of private citizens for the "national good." Park and his cohorts' draconian grip over the ideas and activities of private Korean citizens through the propagation of anti-Red ideology and the coercive activities of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (particularly in the late 1960s through the 1970s) reflected the government's view that private thoughts and actions were closely linked to public safety and national security. The history of suffering and deprivation from the Korean War and the people's desire for prosperity and stability also lent Park Chung Hee the license to demand hard work and personal sacrifice, including the sacrifice of political liberties and participation, for the economic development of the country.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the R.O.K. relied on human resources, rather than natural resources, technology, and indigenous capital, for economic development. But this development did not happen "naturally," owing to Korea's "weak" status with respect to the U.S. government, and business leaders made specific choices to throw the Republic into cheap export orientation, and it can be argued that relying on human resources in the service of promoting security goals was a logical adjunct to such economic practice, especially in a time of Korea's "public" resource-shortage in its security relations with its protector. The sexual

labor of camptown prostitutes and their close proximity to U.S. servicemen made these women into convenient, though unconventional, resources for pursuing the R.O.K.'s security goals.

Camptown Prostitutes Protest

For the Korean and American inhabitants of camptowns, the summer of 1971 was filled with racial, political, economic, social, and sexual tensions. Long-held prejudices, competition, frustration, and misunderstandings came to a head. Indeed, both USFK and R.O.K. government officials agreed that

[t]he drawdown of U.S. forces introduced new elements of tension into traditionally friendly relationships. Accompanying base closures and restationing of U.S. Forces resulted in widespread dislocations among Koreans living in villages adjacent to U.S. bases . . . and resulted in increased competition among bar owners, "business girls," and merchants.⁴⁵

Authorities attempted to defuse the explosive situation, but this in effect politicized the various groups of camptown residents, inciting them to defend and assert their interests both privately and publicly. Black and white soldiers expressed their racial and racist sentiments and demands for changes in military policy through public demonstrations. Similarly, Korean nationals, including prostitutes, staged public protests to voice their grievances against the USFK. In most cases, the women reacted when their bodies and pocketbooks were severely threatened by the actions of base personnel. For example, "about 200 prostitutes carrying sticks demonstrated outside [Camp Ames] demanding immediate arrest" of a GI alleged to have murdered a camptown prostitute on July 16, 1971.⁴⁶

Such protests against alleged GI murders of Korean women and USFK reluctance to turn the accused men over to the R.O.K. legal system were not uncommon even before the clean-up campaign.⁴⁷ What was new in the summer of 1971 was the support the prostitutes received from other residents as they protested what they all believed were USFK injustices toward them.⁴⁸ The most ardent and prolonged of such protests took

place in reaction to the off-limits decree⁴⁹ imposed by commanders in Anjŏng-ni during the racial violence of July 9–10, 1971. What began as a protest at the gates of Camp Humphrey by 100–150 prostitutes on July 13, against the decision of the camp commander to close the compound's main gate and declare Anjŏng-ni off-limits to its men, grew to a crowd of approximately 600 prostitutes and 3,000 other villagers by August 9. During this series of protests, prostitutes demanded that the base authorities withdraw the "cowardly retaliation [*sic*]" by opening the gates; blocked Korean waitresses who worked on the base from entering the compound; hurled stones at military personnel; overturned the car belonging to the P'yŏngt'aek County Police Superintendent; and demanded to meet the base commander.⁵⁰

The base authorities and local KNP (Korean National Police) initially responded to the protests with blockades and gas grenades. The ensuing *mélée* between the protesters and the police (both U.S. military police and KNP) resulted in the arrest and clubbing of several prostitutes and other villagers by the Korean police.⁵¹ But the protests also led to the official recognition of the prostitutes as a significant group to be reckoned with in camptown politics: Ms. Yi Chŏng-ja, "the representative of [the] village's 'girlie Club,'" was invited together with National Assemblyman Ch'oe, Yong-hi and one other village leader, to a luncheon sponsored by Col. Best to discuss the gradual lifting of the off-limits ban on Anjŏng-ni.⁵² The ban on Anjŏng-ni was finally lifted on August 8, 1971 (although seven of the twelve local bars remained off-limits owing to their failure to comply with standards agreed upon by local Korean and command leaders), after forty-eight days of social unrest and economic losses for the Korean residents. Without doubt, the prostitutes initiated and largely sustained the push to lift the ban on the village, as promised by the Humphreys command in late July. The prostitutes not only received the support of other villagers in exerting pressure on the base leadership but also the support of Koreans in the greater society. For example, in a July 29, 1971 article, *Chungang Ilbo*, one of the leading national dailies, accused the Humphreys command of breaking its promise to lift the ban.⁵⁴

Besides the protests in Anjŏng-ni, camptown prostitutes also staged demonstrations on behalf of their "human rights." In May 1971, the

Hanguk Ilbo, another major daily, reported on protests by prostitutes (in P'yŏngt'aek) against GIs' efforts to cut their rates for sex:

Some 1,000 Korean prostitutes staged a demonstration in a camp town near Seoul Monday evening, denouncing American soldiers for attempting to beat down charges for their services by half.

They held rallies and demonstrations in front of a U.S. Army camp in the town for three hours before breaking up voluntarily to wait for "proper measures" by U.S. Army authorities.

In the demonstration, the prostitutes asked the U.S. Army to make an apology for the attempt.⁵⁵

These prostitutes objected to the U.S. airmen's boycott campaign, "Do-Not-Buy-Korean Commodities," begun in mid-April of 1971; the participants were 90 percent black.⁵⁶ The boycott itself was a protest against racial discrimination by Korean residents and against the rise of local prices due to the increased demand from more servicemen redeployed to the P'yŏngt'aek region (as part of the troop reduction). Korean camptown prostitutes were outraged at the boycott and held rallies near various U.S. camps. Songt'an prostitutes "adopted a four-point resolution, calling for the withdrawal of the Korean commodity boycott drive and reverence for the human rights of the Korean people."⁵⁷

According to Kim Yŏn-ja, a veteran of the Songt'an "Women's Association," club prostitutes were insulted by U.S. servicemen who compiled a list of prices they were willing to pay for various goods and services in town. She said the soldiers treated sex as just another object of purchase:

[T]hey fixed the local prices—for example, \$5 for a pair of shoes and \$5 for a "short-time." Therefore, we demonstrated. We charged, "How is it possible that someone can set the same price for a pair of shoes and a woman's body, then print the prices and circulate them?"⁵⁸

Kim Yŏn Ja and other prostitutes found the military men's actions not only economically damaging but morally demeaning. The boycott ended a couple months after its initiation, partly because of insufficient participation by airmen,⁵⁹ but also because of the public protests

by prostitutes and other villagers. Ms. Kim recalled that someone from the U.S. command did apologize to the women, and "therefore things were appeased."⁶⁰

The protests described above demonstrate that many camptown prostitutes, though powerless in many ways, did not remain passive in the camptown turmoils of the early 1970s. Indeed, they formed a local "bloc" with which to protest the U.S. hegemony over the economic and political life of their camptowns. Referring to the protests against the boycott, Ms. Kim stated, "[T]he shop owners and club owners joined forces with us and supported our protest because with fixed prices, the prices of their own goods fell."⁶¹ In other words, U.S. actions, whether off-limits decrees or boycotts and *prix fixe* actions, had direct economic impact on all camptown residents who depended on the bases for their survival. In this sense, although prostitutes were the most despised of the camptown residents, their plight starkly represented the vulnerability of many local Korean residents to U.S. power. The prostitutes thus succeeded in leading other villagers to challenge that power.

The political protests of prostitutes also represent the refusal of many women, who were condemned by Korean society and abused by Koreans and Americans alike, to be treated like commodities. In short, the prostitutes' sense of dignity—however fragile or distorted—asserted itself when pushed too far by others in the camptown communities. For these women, the economic value of their labor and their human worth were intertwined. And, they merged their sense of personal powerlessness, in relation to the bases, to the violation of the human rights, or domination, of the Korean people in general by the United States.

Public protest was one of the last available weapons of influence to which the prostitutes could resort, and such mass protests on the part of camptown residents were one of the main reasons why the U.S. initiated the clean-up campaign. The military sought to prevent such public outcries and disturbances by instituting law and order in the camptown communities. Major General Joseph Perditz, the head of Korea Support Command (KORSCOM), complained of the unruliness of the local Korean population around several of his command areas in the spring and summer of 1971, listing the demonstrations that had broken out near Camps Howard (May 23), Humphreys (July 13 and 27, August 3–5

and 9), Ames (July 19), and Carroll (August 2). He and other high-ranking military officials insisted that the Eighth U.S. Army Commanding General raise the issue with the R.O.K.G. to ensure that such disturbances would no longer occur.⁶² With the initiation of the Clean-Up Campaign, such public challenges to U.S. military power in camptowns became rare throughout the remainder of the 1970s. Law and order and improved communication between U.S. and R.O.K. officials were intended to avoid violent and disorderly actions by both Koreans and Americans in the camptowns, but the effect on prostitutes was further silencing of their voices and anger.

The Camptown Clean-Up Campaign, initiated in the summer of 1971 as a direct response to the civil unrest and racial violence in Anjŏng-ni, marked the end of an era of "wildness" and "freedom" for many camptown prostitutes and the beginning of official reconstruction—by both the U.S. and R.O.K.—of prostitutes' identities and roles. Beginning in July 1971, the Korean prostitutes were no longer seen as individuals forced by public crises and dispossession, namely the Korean War and poverty, into prostitution. Instead, through the Clean-Up Campaign, the personal service that prostitutes could provide to GIs made them "private ambassadors" and "patriots." The rules of the game changed as well. The prostitutes were no longer allowed to eke out a living for themselves and their family members as willfully and wilefully as they could but rather were required to submit their bodies, work activities, and homes (rooms) to the systematic scrutiny and control of U.S. military and local Korean authorities.

How did the women deal with the changes in their lives brought on by the Clean-Up Campaign? If public protest was shut off to them, how did the women give voice to their interests? Did they accept the Korean government's transformation of their sex work into a form of patriotism? The general attitude of the women toward the Clean-Up activities appears to have been one of annoyance. Most women found the mandatory VD talks imposed by some local camptown authorities to be yet another regulatory nuisance aimed at protecting the health and welfare of the GIs but not the Korean women. All of the Korean women I interviewed blamed the Korean government for failing to distribute condoms and show women how to use them. They contrasted this with USFK

practice: condoms were readily available, free of charge, at the compound gates for the soldiers to take into the camptowns. The women believed that proper education and the availability of condoms were not a priority for the R.O.K. government because the physical control over the women's bodies, through the examination and detention system, served as the core of VD control.

Across the board, camptown prostitutes detested the mandatory VD examination system and its heightened enforcement. First, they found the exams deeply humiliating. The women interviewed repeatedly used the word "shame" and "dread" to describe their feelings about VD exams. A USFK community relations officer (who is a Korean national himself), then active in VD control in Ŭijŏngbu, pointed out that some of the "smarter women" told him that forced VD exams amounted to a violation of their human rights.⁶³ He noted that these women especially took offense at being harassed by U.S. military police (MPs)—to show valid VD cards—and at being examined by U.S. medics; they charged infringement of their rights as Korean citizens: "We're Korean. Why are American doctors and police checking us?"⁶⁴ On the other hand, one woman asserted that some prostitutes would have preferred being checked by Americans because, given that most Koreans despised these women, it was more embarrassing to expose their genitals to Korean nationals than to American foreigners.⁶⁵ Some women questioned the validity of a VD prevention system that focused only on women's genitals: "Why are the authorities cracking down on us? American GIs are half the problem!"⁶⁶

Alongside VD registration and effective diagnosis and treatment, the Clean-Up Campaign emphasized establishing and/or reinforcing strict "contact identification" systems. The purpose was to locate the female source of VD and order her to obtain treatment so that she would not spread infection further. Nearly all the bases had some form of contact system and regularly briefed servicemen regarding the contact procedures they should follow in case of VD contraction. Most of the women found the various contact identification measures humiliating, burdensome, inaccurate, and unfair. With the "tag system," women were required to wear numbered tags on their chest so that a GI could report the number (and hence, the woman's name) to his superiors in case of

VD infection.⁶⁷ Most of the women I interviewed did wear such tags beginning in the early 1970s and remarked bitterly that they felt humiliated in doing so. One woman asserted that many of her co-workers complained among themselves, "We're not animals—why are they tagging us and rounding us up!"⁶⁸

Some commands encouraged the infected GI to go to the club or home of the alleged VD transmitter and point her out to the relevant military officials. Accused women found such public displays condemning and degrading and would put up loud and sometimes violent resistance, causing GIs to avoid such face-to-face confrontations. In response, most commands eventually adopted less confrontational practices, such as having the infected soldier simply point out the room where the alleged transmitter lived and then have medical officials and/or police force her to get treated. The major reason for such indirect accusations stemmed from soldiers' fear of retaliation from the prostitutes.⁶⁹

When asked about the Korean government's designation of their work and role in U.S.-Korea relations as "patriotic," all of the women stated that no camptown woman they ever knew felt that her sex work was a nationalistic or patriotic act and that economic need was what drove most women to remain in prostitution. A "Mrs. Pak" put it simply: "It was shameful work: How could it be patriotic sacrifice?"⁷⁰ Several of the women interviewed pursued the idea of patriotism and stated that patriotism requires education and the positive provision and enforcement of skills to conduct "necessary and important work" for the country. They did not view their sex work as necessary or important for the security of Korea.

Most women admitted that they were unsure of the meaning of "national security" (*kugga anbo*), for which they were supposed to use their bodies, but they were certain that actions by the Korean government generally were oblivious to their physical and economic needs. Ms. Kim Yŏn-ja, former prostitute turned activist, sharply articulated that the rationales of the Korean government and U.S. military, namely, public professions of national security requirements, had no connection to the actual needs of camptown women. All of the women interviewed stated that their greatest need for R.O.K. protection (after the Korean War) was not from North Korean threats but the exploitation and abuse

by clubowners/pimps, local Korean police and VD clinic officials, and the power of the U.S. bases.

All of the women expressed anger and contempt for their own government during the 1960s and 1970s for not standing up to the U.S. to fight for the rights of Koreans. In the words of one "Mrs. Ch'oe," "Korea was a land where only idiots lived: the government could not even defend its own people's interests, vis-à-vis the U.S."⁷¹ Many of these women also believe that camptown women were generally not interested in issues of national security or other governmental policies because they felt powerless to influence or react to them. Ms. Kim stated that "because camptown prostitutes had no political power to effect policy changes, the interest wasn't there." She immediately added, "But this refers to Koreans in general—there really isn't much that we Koreans have been able to influence vis-à-vis the U.S. Is there?"⁷²

The prostitutes whose voices and experiences inform this essay all witnessed the poverty and collapse of Korean society from the days of the civil war as well as the economic and international ascendance of South Korea in the last twenty years. They identified their personal lives closely with the losses and struggles of their country. They often associated the sexual abuse and exploitation of their bodies with the political and military domination of their country by the U.S. But they also harbored what seemed to me to be an honest sense of disappointment and a clear understanding that their government and people, not only the U.S. military, were to blame for their degraded lives. In this sense, these uneducated and under-educated women displayed a more realistic assessment of Korea's problems than many of the highly educated political leaders and activists who have criticized U.S.-Korea relations and the presence of U.S. bases in South Korea. For the women, the discovery of self-worth and improved livelihoods would not come with the potential removal of U.S. military bases. The sources of their abuse and exploitation would not necessarily change with the departure of American troops: severe class stratification; Confucianist moral norms of womanhood that deemed them social and moral pariahs; and a political system and culture that do not listen to the voices and input of women and the dispossessed. Even those groups actively fighting to expose and seek compensation for human rights violations against former women sex

slaves to the Japanese Imperial Army have consciously tried to keep the plight and cause of the U.S. camptown prostitutes out of their movement. Former "comfort women" protest the identification of their past victimization and current campaign for justice with those of U.S. GI prostitutes.⁷³ The "comfort women" do not want to be associated with such "morally decadent," "trashy" women who "voluntarily" entered prostitution.

To make analogies between the dominated and conquered state of a nation and the bodies of individual women makes sense in the case of Japanese imperialism in Korea and "comfort women" of the 1940s. The Japanese did have effective, "colonialized" control over Korea. The Japanese military did "recruit" and deploy tens of thousands of Korean women, which was humiliating and shameful to Koreans. But in the case of U.S. camptown prostitution, such an analogy is not accurate. There is a substantial difference between the resources available to poor, uneducated, lower-class women and those available to a juridically sovereign (postwar) state with near monopoly control over the economic, political, and social levers of society, as Korea was in the 1970s. It is possible to argue that individual girls and women were forced into prostitution by pimps or dire economic circumstances, but it is not as convincing to argue that the Korean government was forced by the U.S. to prostitute their women. Despite its historical arrogance in dictating Korean camptown life, the U.S. military institution did not kidnap or force individual women into prostitution. Nor did it require the prostitution of Korean women as a requirement for defending Korean soil. Given its geostrategic interest in Korea, from the 1950s to the 1980s, the U.S. would not have exited Korea, even if there had been no women to buy sex from.

What historically grew out of the exigencies of war, Korean women as camp followers, became instituted as an economic and social system by governmental authorities, both U.S. and Korean. Such institutionalization was a function of choice—on the part of the Park regime to prostitute a segment of the Korean female population for the purpose of economic and military gains, and on the part of the U.S. military to assume that prostitution was a necessary evil and Korean women mere commodities, whose bodies and human dignity were disposable. The factor

of "choice" in the policy decisions and adaptations of the R.O.K. and U.S. governments must be scrutinized and criticized if we are to advocate genuinely for the needs and interests of poor and dispossessed women. The U.S. bases will not stay in Korea forever, but neither will the sexual domination and abuse of Korean women by foreign men vanish with the departure of U.S. troops unless the Korean government and people make new and different choices about the worth of women in their society.

NOTES

1. For example, Yayori Matsui refers to the larger phenomenon of sex tourism as a North-South problem in *Women's Asia* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1989), 71. Also, Elaine Kim, "Sex Tourism in Asia: A Reflection of Political and Economic Inequality," in Eui-Young Yu and E.H. Phillips, eds. *Korean Women in Transition* (Los Angeles: Center for Korean-American Studies, California State University, 1987). See also Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, Ltd., 1986), 137-142. For specific explanations of the relationship between inter-state power and military prostitution in Asia, see articles by Bruce Cumings, Aida Santos, and Walden Bello in Sandra Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus, eds., *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia* (New York: The New Press, 1992).
2. Nicholas Boronoff, *Pink Samurai* (London: Grafton Books, 1991), 217. This point and others regarding some differences between the development of U.S. military prostitution in Japan and Korea were assessed by a former Wellesley College student, Aria Lu. I am grateful to her for sharing her resources and perspectives in a paper, entitled "One's for Pleasure, the Other's for Fun: A Comparison of the Differences in the Development of the Military Prostitution Policies of Japan and Korea," written for a seminar I taught in spring 1995 at Wellesley College ("Political Economy of the Body: Sex Industries in Asia").
3. Numerous factors, such as geographic location of the base (e.g., urban or rural, war zone or peace-keeping), familiarity of the host nation's language and culture, racial makeup of and stereotypes held by both U.S. soldiers and locals, military classification of the post (e.g., hardship tour, combat zone), military sponsorship versus non-command-sponsored tour, ages of soldiers, and individual command policies influence where, how, and why military prostitution occurs.
4. Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives* (Boston: Pandora Press, 1988), 25.
5. Col. Robert W. Sherwood, Chief of Preventive Medicine Division, Directorate of Health and Environment, Office of the Surgeon General, U.S. Army, "Deposition Form—Trip Report to Eighth U.S. Army, Korea, 7/7/72," 7.
6. Office of International Relations, Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA), Seoul, "Psychological Operations Campaign Control Sheet," 1-2.
7. The Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) Joint Committee, composed of a delegation from the U.S. military and U.S. Embassy in Korea and the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was established in 1967 as the central and primary body responsible for managing USFK-R.O.K. relations, in accordance with the U.S.-R.O.K. Status of Forces Agreement, on a regular basis. The Committee met monthly until 1980 and three or four times a year from 1980 to the present. The "Minutes" of the Joint Committee state that they "are considered as official documents pertaining to both Governments." The complete volumes of the Minutes can be found in the U.S. Library of Congress. The Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Civil-Military Relations was established by the Joint Committee in 1971 to address camptown problems. The Subcommittee Minutes are

kept by the Institute for Foreign Affairs and National Security in Seoul and are not available to the public.

8. Joint Committee Minutes (JCM), #69, Inclosure 2 to Inclosure 11, December 16, 1971.

9. Üijöngbu, Tongduch'ön, and Songt'an are the three main U.S. camp areas mentioned in this paper. Üijöngbu and Tongduch'ön, north of Seoul, respectively house the I Corps (R.O.K./U.S.) Group at Camp Red Cloud and the Second Division at Camp Casey. Songtan serves as the camptown for U.S. personnel at Osan Air Base.

10. "Psychological Operations Campaign Control Sheet," 3.

11. Five hundred flyers containing such instruction were distributed to club women in July, 1971 by EUSA Psychological Operations officials. A copy of the flyer is recorded as Inclosure B of the Psychological Operations Memorandum by Col. Sasfy. The translation from Korean to English is mine.

12. Office of the Chief of Staff, Headquarters, USFK, "Problems in Civil-Military Relations in the R.O.K. and the First Year of the Operation of the U.S.-R.O.K. Joint Committee's Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Civil-Military Relations," 1972, 1. (This report was attached to a letter written by Lt. Gen. Robert Smith, Chief of Staff, USFK and U.S. Representative to the Joint Committee, and sent to Philip Habib, U.S. Ambassador to the R.O.K., 1971-74.)

13. Interview, Üijöngbu, June, 1992. This Community Relations officer for the USFK noted that for reasons of national dignity, a name like "National VD Purification Movement" would have been inappropriate.

14. Base Community Clean-Up Committee, "Woegukkun giji jönghua jönghab daech'aek" (Comprehensive Policy for the Purification of Foreign Troop Bases), July, 1972, enclosed in Subcommittee Minutes, #12, July 31, 1972; Subcommittee Minutes, #8, March 20, 1972; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Kijich'on jönghwarül wihan woemubu sihaeng gyeboek #1" (MOFA Plans for the Purification of Camptowns), enclosed in Subcommittee Minutes, #6, January 24, 1972; Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, VD Control Programs, enclosed in Subcommittee Minutes, #10 (submitted to MOFA upon MOFA's solicitation of information from relevant ministries, to be reported to the 70th meeting of the SOFA Joint Committee).

15. Conversations with Yu Pok Nim, co-founder of Turebang (My Sister's Place), a counselling center in Üijöngbu and Tongduch'ön for GI (Korean) wives and camptown prostitutes, 1991-92; Migun kiji bandae jönguk kongdong daech'aek, *Yangki go hom* (Yankee Go Home), (Seoul: Migun kiji bandae jönguk kongdong daech'aek, 1990); Pusan minjok minju undong yönhap (Federation of Pusan People's Democracy Movement), *Nöhiga mullönaya uriga sanda* (You Must Withdraw So That We Can Live), (Seoul: Toso Publishing Co., 1991), Part II, Chapter 2; *Malji* (Mal Magazine).

16. Letter by Lt. Gen. T.W. Dunn, Commander of I Corps (Group) to EUSA Commanding General Hamilton Howze, July 19, 1964.

17. EUSA (Eighth U.S. Army), "Civil Affairs Handbook," #530-4, January 11, 1968, 68.

18. Memorandum from EUSA IO to EUSA Deputy Chief of Staff, Re: "Construction of Medical Clinics," May 3, 1963.

19. Memorandum by Maj. Saalberg, EUSA G-1 Action Officer, Re: "Report on Venereal Disease," January 14, 1963.

20. Astri Suhrke, "Gratuity or Tyranny: The Korean Alliance," in *World Politics*, 25:4 (July 1973).

21. Interview, Üijöngbu, 6/4/92.

22. Sungjoo Han, "South Korea's Participation in the Vietnam Conflict: An Analysis of the U.S.-Korean Alliance," in *Orbis*, 21 (winter 1978).

23. Telephone interview with U.S. Representative to the Joint Committee, 1973-75, on October 31, 1991. This official noted that when he asked the then U.S. Ambassador to Korea, Philip Habib, why camptown problems had not been resolved before his tenure on the JC, Habib responded that because "Korea was fighting our war for us in Vietnam—with their best division, the U.S. could not push too hard." (These words were paraphrased by the interviewee.)

24. *Korea Herald*, July 17, 1971.

25. Interview, Connecticut, October 24, 1991.

26. Ibid.

27. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 6, 1970.

28. *Korea Herald*, January 31, 1971.

29. U.S. House of Representatives, *Investigation of Korean-American Relations*, Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Organizations of the Committee on International Relations, Part I, June, 1977, 34.

30. *Kkangt'ong* literally means tin can in Korean. The term has been used since the Korean War. The popular use of the cans began with the influx of canned goods brought by the U.S. military. *Kkangt'ongmunhwa* refers to flimsy, tacky, and cheap culture.

31. Interview, Seoul, June 11, 1992.

32. Interview, Seoul, May 14, 1992.

33. Telephone interview, Seoul, June 15, 1992.

34. Interview, Üijöngbu, June 4, 1992.

35. Interview, Seoul, June 11, 1992.

36. Interview, Üijöngbu, June 12, 1992.

37. Interview with Kim Yöon Ja, Songtan, May 3, 1992.

38. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Civil-Military Relations, "Nineteenth Report," January 23, 1975; JCM, #101, January 30, 1975, Inclosure 19.

39. Glenn Snyder refers to such dominance on the patron's part as the "preponderance

of influence" in "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut," in *Journal of International Affairs*, no.44 (1990).

40. Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr mention such "internal" capabilities of weak states in transforming the resources within a state's borders as instruments of foreign policy: "Intangibles such as leadership, belief in a cause, and especially cohesion resulting from a threat to survival are important assets for smaller states in unequal, or asymmetric, conflicts." *World Politics: The Menu for Choice*, 4th ed. (New York: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1992), 147.

41. David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (New York: Plume, 1988), 83; Andrew Rotter, "Gender Relations, Foreign Relations: The United States and South Asia, 1947-1964" in *The Journal of American History* (9/94), 518-542. For a discussion of gender identities of colonizing and colonized nations in general, see Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 47-51.

42. Numerous stories contain this basic theme of self-sacrifice for the family's and country's good, but the story of Nongae best captures the totality of woman's sacrifice—body, chastity, and life—for the love of her country. The story of Nongae has been taught in Korean schools and celebrated as an example of Korean women's personal contributions to Korea's historical fight against Japanese encroachment. According to the legend, Nongae, the concubine of General Ch'oe Kyōng-hoe, governor of Chinju in the late 1500s, seduced a Japanese commander, Rokusuke Kedanimura, during the Japanese invasion of Korea and siege of Chinju in 1592, in order to kill him. While dancing with him, she led him toward the edge of a cliff and threw herself and Kedanimura into the river beneath. It is said in Korea that every June 29 of the lunar calendar, *kisaeng* and others go pay respects to Nongae at the shrine established by government authorities in Chinju.

43. Kyung-Ae Park, "Women and Development: The Case of South Korea," in *Comparative Politics*, 25:2 (January, 1993).

44. In their survey of R.O.K. legislative records regarding prostitution, Hyung Cho and Pil Wha Chang found that members of the National Assembly demonstrated a "pragmatic permissiveness" toward *kijich'on* and other foreign exchange-oriented prostitution in Korea. "Perspectives on Prostitution in the Korean Legislature: 1948-1989" in *Women's Studies Review*, v. 7 (December 1990) (in Korean).

45. The quoted portion appears in capital letters in the Minutes of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Civil-Military Relations, Meeting #11, June 30, 1972.

46. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, July 28, 1971.

47. For example, more than 300 prostitutes "staged a protest funeral march in front of 8057 American Unit [in Pup'yōng], demanding a Sgt. Teni [phonetic] appear before them. They charged the American responsible for the death of one of their friends called Miss Yi Ūn-ja," 23 years of age. "The hearse carrying the girls in white mourning dress, [sic] stopped in front of the unit's front door en route to a burial site and shouted: 'Come out Teni. Let him appear before us.' They also attempted to enter the unit compound and were stopped by about 50 American military police and 30 Korean police." *Korea Times*, May 15, 1969.

48. For example, according to a letter by Maj. Gen. Joseph Perditz, Commander of KORSCOM, "Several females penetrated the area between the inner and outer gates when a CID [Criminal Investigation Division] vehicle entered the compound. These KNs [Korean Nationals] were exchanged for two U.S. soldiers held hostage by the crowd." By mid-afternoon, four more soldiers were held hostage, and the crowd, led by prostitutes, demanded to speak to the installation commander, who agreed to do so. Letter from Perditz to EUSA Commanding General, Re: "Lack of Control of Civilian Populace," August 10, 1971.

49. The then Commander of Camp Humphreys placed the town indefinitely off-limits to U.S. personnel at 1 a.m. on July 10. Off-limits placed on individual bars or camp areas meant that no U.S. personnel was permitted to enter, hence patronize, the area(s). As a consequence, Korean camptown residents whose incomes depended on U.S. military patronage suffered economically.

50. *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, August 12, 1971; *Chungang Ilbo*, July 29, 1971 (EUSA translation); *Taeahan Ilbo*, July 13, 1971 and August 10, 1971; letter from Perditz to EUSA Commanding General, Re: "Lack of Control of Civilian Populace," August 10, 1971; Letter from Col. F. Best, Commander of Camp Humphreys, to Maj. Gen. J. Perditz, February 7, 1972 (in letter from Perditz to EUSA Commanding General, Re: "Continuing Harassment by Korean Officials in Attempts to Place Back-Alley Clubs On-Limits," February 7, 1972).

51. Letter from Perditz, Re: "Lack of Control of Civilian Populace."

52. Yi Chōng-ja was the then president of the Anjōng-ni prostitutes' "Women's Association." According to her colleagues and friends, she had served in this capacity since the 1960s and had been an advocate of prostitutes' interests until recent years. Kim Yōn Ja, a former leader of the "Women's Associations" in Kunsan and Song'an, told me that Ms. Yi would have been able to describe in detail the camptown politics of Anjōng-ni during the 1970s, but when Ms. Kim and I tried to locate Ms. Yi, we found out that she had passed away. Most of the large camptowns had "women's associations" which were supposed to serve as intermediaries between the numerous prostitutes and local officials. Although they were supposed to represent the women's interests, most such organizations did not have autonomy but rather served to convey the local Korean and U.S. authorities' interests to the women. These associations required their members to pay dues and served as emergency support for those in need of financial help, for example, in the case of illness. The organizations also helped pay for funerals of prostitutes whose relatives were unwilling or unable to pay. The relative strength and independence of such associations to represent and assert the interests of prostitutes depended to a great extent on the strength, authority, and capabilities of the association leaders. Both Ms. Yi and Ms. Kim were recognized by other prostitutes and local USFK and R.O.K. officials as strong, aggressive women who helped bring about some positive change for the women in their camptowns.

53. *Korea Herald*, July 30, 1971.

54. *Chungang Ilbo*, July 29, 1971 (EUSA translation).

55. *Hanguk Ilbo*, May 4, 1971 (EUSA translation).

56. *Overseas Weekly*, August 14, 1971.

57. *Chosŏn Ilbo*, May 4, 1971 (EUSA translation).
58. Interview with Kim Yŏn-ja, Songt'an, May 3, 1992.
59. *Overseas Weekly*, August 14, 1971.
60. Interview with Kim Yŏn Ja, Songtan, May 3, 1992.
61. Ibid.
62. Letter from Perditz, Re: "Lack of Control of Civilian Populace," August 10, 1971.
63. Interview with community relations officer, *Ŭijŏngbu*, June 4, 1992.
64. Ibid.
65. Interviews with Community Relations officer, *Ŭijŏngbu*, June 4, 1992 and Kim Yŏn Ja, May 3, 1992.
66. Interview with Kim Yŏn-ja, Kunsan, May 14, 1992.
67. Most medical offices and Provost Marshall Offices kept a book or file of records containing information regarding each registered woman in the base area. The information included the name, photograph, VD card registration number, local address, and the club name in which each woman worked. The tag number would accordingly be matched with the woman's file.
68. Interview with Kim Yŏn-ja, Songt'an, May 3, 1992.
69. Regarding soldiers' reluctance to name prostitutes face-to-face, one *Pacific Stars and Stripes* article (November 2, 1971) noted, "Some of the soldiers fear retaliation the next time they go into the village [for having accused a woman]. However, each is assured [by the medical office] that he will only have to point out the girl's residence and will not make eye-to-eye contact with her if he doesn't want to. We [U.S. medics] drop the KNP [Korean National Police] at the hooch and then take the GI back to his unit or dispensary."
70. Telephone interview with "Mrs. Pak" via "Mrs. Smith" (pseudonyms), April 2, 1993. "Mrs. Smith" served as an intermediary.
71. Telephone interview with "Mrs. Ch'oe" via "Mrs. Smith" (pseudonyms), April 2, 1993.
72. Interview with Kim Yŏn-ja, Songt'an, May 3, 1992.
73. Conversations with a *Chosŏn Ilbo* correspondent who has actively followed the "comfort women" issue, spring, 1995.

8

HYUN SOOK KIM

Yanggongju as an Allegory of the Nation:

The Representation of Working-Class Women in Popular and Radical Texts

There is no space from where the subaltern (sexed) subject can speak.
—Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Far from being natural, . . . bodies are "maps of power and identity": or, rather, maps of the relation between power and identity.
—Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography*

In February 1995, a former sex worker (Kim Yŏn-ja) and two activists from Korea (a female, feminist writer and a male videomaker/photographer) led a three-week tour through eight major cities in the United States. The purpose of the tour was to raise Americans' awareness about the problem of militarized prostitution with foreigners in Korea and its impact on the lives of Korean women and their children. I was among many activists on the East Coast who helped to coordinate the speaking tour and in particular to organize a