

ASIA PACIFIC MODERN

Takashi Fujitani, Series Editor

1. *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*, by Miriam Silverberg
2. *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific*, by Shu-mei Shih
3. *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910-1945*, by Theodore Jun Yoo

The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea

*Education, Labor, and Health,
1910-1945*

Theodore Jun Yoo



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Berkeley Los Angeles London

sire, and love in the "new home." By professionalizing housework and elevating married women to national importance, domestic science proclaimed that women could conduct traditional domestic work yet still maintain their modern sense of self. Although one could view the new ideology of "prudent mother, professional housewife" as a relinquishing of women's initiative, its very development reflects the influential role played by the new women in shaping the terms of Korean womanhood.

CHAPTER THREE

The Female Worker

From Home to the Factory

Two years before her untimely death from pulmonary tuberculosis, Song Kye-wŏl (1910–33), a reporter for *Sin yŏsŏng* (The new woman), penned a short story that foreshadowed her demise.¹ "News from a Factory" is one of the few works to address the plight of female workers in colonial Korea through the eyes of a displaced peasant worker.² The main character, Kim Ok-pun, in a final letter to her sister, describes the miseries of tuberculosis, which she contracted while working at a silk-reeling factory: "The clotting of blood in my mouth and the spitting up of rotten phlegm [signal that] my time is fleeting."³ The empty cot in her ward is a reminder that her fifteen-year-old coworker, Kŭm-dol, has died of the same disease. Forced to enter the labor force by her father's desertion of the family for a *kisaeng* (female entertainer), Kim pronounces a scathing indictment of the harsh working conditions and merciless exploitation of countless Korean women: "[The factory] fattens [its profits] by squeezing our blood and sweat."⁴

Song's vivid factory narrative captured the wrenching turmoil spawned by rapid industrialization and rural impoverishment during the colonial period. The birth of the *yŏgong* (factory girl) introduced a new dynamic into the complex interaction between the Korean family structure, based

on Confucian patriarchy and values, and the new ideologies of womanhood, which vied for dominance in colonial Korea. While many female workers sought to maintain the deep ties to their families out of filial loyalty, they blazed an untrodden path as “workers” and “unskilled labor”—new social categories that embodied important political and social meanings. More broadly, the migration of peasant women from rural areas to industrial centers posed a threat to existing norms of social control and gender definitions, prompting multiple voices (from state authorities to women writers) to articulate competing visions of power relations.

This chapter examines the transition of Korean women from the home to the newly constructed factories—a process fraught with tension, as colonial authorities reorganized the labor force through an intense sexual division of labor based on marital and reproductive status. The factory girl as a new *category* embodied a segment of the “political anatomy,” constructed by multiple players (including the colonial state, Korean nationalists, educated women, and others). As a part of the greater social body, she was a cog in machinery that, to borrow Michel Foucault’s phrasing, was to function “with the techniques, the speed, and efficiency that [the industrialists] determined.”⁵ At the same time, the *yōgong* was an individual who often entered the wage market as part of a family strategy (like the fictional Kim Ok-pun), carefully negotiating the boundaries between traditional ideologies and new discourses that sought to reshape her identity and role. More important, unlike elite women, commoner women had worked in the fields, cottage industries, and marketplace prior to the colonial period; as they adapted their skills to the demands of the new workplace, women workers forged new identities and subcultures through common hardships in the factories and dormitories, illness, and experiences of displacement and marginalization.

KOREAN WOMEN IN THE CHOSŌN ECONOMY

Korean women played a significant role behind the scenes in the fields and specialized in cottage industries during the Chosŏn period. The gen-

dered division of labor among commoners placed the dual burden of household and agricultural work (or small trades) on women. Prior to the introduction of innovative techniques like *iangpōp* (rice transplantation method) and new plowing methods in the second half of the Chosŏn period, women assumed the tedious task of preparing and sowing the rice seed by hand, as well as weeding the crop throughout the busy agricultural season. Following the autumn harvest, women sorted out the good seeds for the next harvest.⁶ Women laboring in the rice paddies would have been a common sight to travelers passing through the Korean countryside during spring and summer. In Kwangbok (north Hamgyŏng Province), women also tended livestock, especially sheep, to help their husbands. With the mothers occupied in the fields, it fell to the young daughters to perform basic domestic tasks, such as fetching water from the well.⁷

After a long day in the fields, women prepared meals for their families—a labor-intensive chore because most staples, such as rice and grains, were unprocessed. While the more privileged families relied on a watermill to pound rice, commoners pulverized grain using a millstone pulled by a horse or donkey throughout the day. In the countryside, women often used a simple mortar to pound rice, barley, millet, and kaoliang, which often consumed an entire day’s labor. Yi Nŭng-hwa captured the drudgery of women’s lives in her own day: “No time to rest. Morning: rice to make; afternoon, following lunch: work in the field; and night: dry the barley and pound it in a mortar. . . . [T]he entire day [she] has no time to rest.”⁸ Not only were women responsible for feeding family members at home, but they also made frequent trips to the fields to bring meals to their husbands.⁹ Paintings by Cho Yōng-sŏk (1686–1761) and Kim Hong-do (1745–1810) captured the daily ritual of women who brought sustenance to their farmer husbands. In addition to feeding their households, women washed clothes by the barrelful for seven or eight hours at a time. One painting by Kim Hong-do depicts a group of women pounding clothing with wooden paddles on a fulling block. So important was laundry day in Korean life that a

nineteenth-century French traveler described Seoul as "a huge laundry house."¹⁰

Women of all classes engaged in cottage industries to supplement the income of the family and pay the taxes.¹¹ Although women were not paid laborers per se, the income from sales of their handicrafts was critical to the family budget. Cloth and garment production were particularly important handicrafts. Women cultivated silkworms and produced silk for market. They also spun their own yarn or thread from hemp, ramie, and cotton, and used whatever could not be sold at market to weave and embroider cloth or clothing. In Korean culture, good needlework was the measure of a woman's worth. As the old Chosŏn saying said, "A woman who is ignorant in the art of needlework or weaving is like a *yangban* man who neither knows how to write calligraphy and poetry nor is familiar with the six etiquettes."¹² Even wives in elite families engaged in needlework; custom dictated that her "seven friends" be "needles, thread, a ruler, a spool, iron, thimble, and scissors."¹³ They had to resort to needlework and weaving, especially during the years when their husbands were preparing for the civil service examinations.¹⁴

The marketplace was a central site for the purchase and sale of products and food. Yi Nŭng-hwa observed that it was common in his day to see Korean women carrying wicker baskets on their heads to sell products at the market, and the "old records" revealed that it "had always been a popular practice."¹⁵ The dominance of women in the marketplace was captured by the painter Sin Yun-bok (1758–1813), who portrayed women peddling dried fish, and Kim Tŭk-sin (1754–1822), who painted women carrying wares on their heads on the way to the market. Women were both consumers and producers: they needed to purchase enough food to feed their families, and they sold their handicrafts to pay for these items. Apart from anecdotal stories and paintings, little is known about the female culture of the marketplace and its language of bargaining, system of credit, or advertising of wares.¹⁶

In this proto-industrial context, the term *yŏgong* simply described women who worked, and *yŏgongp'um* referred to products made by

women, including ramie and cotton cloth, silk fabric, woven goods, and needlecrafts.¹⁷ In the colonial period, the term *yŏgong* would take on a new meaning—from "women's work" (a combination of the Chinese characters for "women" and "work"), it came to designate a new social category. The word *kong* no longer referred to work but specifically alluded to the *kongjang* (factory). These women were transformed from "women who worked" into "women factory workers."

JAPANESE ECONOMIC COLONIZATION: THE QUEST FOR WORKERS AND MARKETS

The transition of Korean female workers from their rural homes to the factory was a consequence of the belated but rapid industrialization that transformed the Korean economy. Just a month before the 1910 annexation, the American missionary Frank Brockman (1878–1929) lamented Korea's ignorance of the "Occidental trade," based on his two-month appraisal of the situation: "It is true that a few textiles are woven in homes, and rice is milled by hand, likewise little tanning of hides and curing of tobacco is carried on in the home. In brief it may be said, that there is no manufacturing in Seoul, only a few handicrafts. There is nothing in the industrial life of the city really worthy of the name: no factories, no mills; only a few workshops." Despite his critical tone, he had also observed a change in Korean society that was a result of the opening of the ports and the sudden infusion of Japanese products. "The most lamentable fact is that the result of their labors no longer satisfies the fancy of their own people," Brockman noted with dismay. "Whenever their goods stand in competition with the goods made abroad the Korean sees his own thrown aside." In his judgment, the cause was "lack of energy, insufficient stimulus for ambition, and centuries of official oppression."¹⁸

In spite of his misgivings, Brockman could not deny that something new was taking place before his eyes: "Korea is today facing an industrial revolution even in our lifetime such as she has never dreamed of, and it would be criminal for us Christian educators not to recognize the duty

arising from this situation."¹⁹ The Korean press also observed the changes. As an editorial in the *Maeil sinmun* proudly announced in 1913, Korea was "entering into a realm of advanced nations."²⁰ In 1935, a Japanese economist, Takahashi Kamekichi, noted in retrospect that the entry of Japanese capitalism into Korea was like "water breaking from a reservoir."²¹

The process of industrialization that followed Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula in 1910 did not, of course, result in the overnight creation of factories and women workers. Exogenous factors coupled with shifts in the political economy played a critical role in shaping Japan's colonial policies. The World War I economic boom proved fortuitous for Japan as it took over European colonies in East Asia at minimal cost. Moreover, its international trade increased significantly during the years 1910-20, as it became a "full-fledged industrial nation."²² Japanese yarn and cloth manufacturers quickly moved to fill the vacuum as European and U.S. cotton exports to Asia dwindled.²³ According to Kozo Yamamura, Japan became a major player in the world economy overnight as a supplier of industrial goods: "The number of industrial factories doubled, employment quadrupled in heavy and chemical industries, and tripled in light industry."²⁴ The demand for war materials increased trade between Japan and European states, and by 1914, Japan had not only eradicated its debt of 1.1 billion yen but had become a creditor nation, with more than 2.77 billion yen by the start of 1920.²⁵ However, as the war ended in Europe and the Western powers resumed their interest in Asian markets, exports fell drastically and Japan plunged into a depression as a result its declining role in international markets. Faced with balance of payment deficits, soaring inflation, and a shortage of grains, the Japanese government sought to permanently stem this crisis as quickly as possible.

Japan, which needed an outlet for the goods produced by its collapsing industries, turned to its neighbor Korea during this prolonged recession. At this nascent stage, the government offered Japanese firms state-sponsored loans with low interest rates to promote development.²⁶

In 1919, in the aftermath of the March First Movement and nationwide protests in Korea, newly appointed Governor-General Saitō Makoto introduced reforms in the name of *bunka seiji* (cultural rule), including liberalization of the press and a new economic policy.²⁷ In pursuit of free trade, the government rescinded the Corporation Law of 1910, which had inhibited investment in nonagricultural sectors.²⁸ In addition, the Export Association Law of 1925 allowed large *zaibatsu* (conglomerates) like Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Yasuda (all financed by state banks) to set up cement, paper, sugar, rice, and flour mills in Korea. At the same time, the Japanese companies Tōyō, Kanegafuchi, Dai-Nihon, Fuji-gasu, Nisshin, and Osaka-gōdō, otherwise known as the "Big Six," began to take control of the Korean textile market.²⁹

With the entry of Japan's biggest *zaibatsu* coupled with the abundance of cheap labor power and raw materials, a viable market quickly arose on the peninsula.³⁰ Furthermore, the promotion of the *nai-sen kyōdo jiggyō* (joint Korean-Japanese ventures) policy of September 1921 "opened the door to a limited but [real] efflorescence of Korean industrial capitalism."³¹ According to Government-General statistics, the number of factories increased from 251 in 1911 to 1,900 in 1919 (table 1). Similarly, in his study of Japanese factories in Korea, Professor Ta Chen noted that Japan was no longer Korea's financier but its "leading customer." By the end of 1927, the number of factories in Korea had "increased 19.5 times, capital 51.1 times, employees 6.1 times, horsepower 19.4 times, and the value of industrial products 18.8 times."³²

This rapid industrialization and modernization of the Korean economy had significant ramifications for the countryside, uprooting traditional communities and challenging social and cultural norms.

THE RURAL CRISIS IN KOREA: JAPANESE POLICIES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Japanese policies in rural Korea were dictated by two primary concerns: the demands of its population at home and the need to maintain order

Table 1. *Development of Industry*

	Number of factories	Capital	Total workers	Korean workers
1911	251	10,613,830	14,575	12,180
1916	1,075	24,613,500	28,646	23,787
1919	1,900	129,378,761	48,705	41,873

SOURCE: Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nempō* (1924).

in the rural areas by creating obstacles to economic independence and prosperity. As a result, the fortunes of rural Koreans rose and fell, depending on the needs of the colonial power. For Japan, the Korean countryside represented an ideal source of tax revenues and food production. In fact, the new land tax levied in 1914 provided more than 45 percent of local government revenues. To ensure that Japan maximally utilized Korean resources, the cadastral survey of 1910–18 set up a modern administrative apparatus that collected tax revenues and confiscated crop surpluses on “an unprecedented scale.”³³ By legalizing the private ownership of land (Civil Law of 1912) and giving landlords a better bargaining position through an annual contract system with tenants, the Government-General could secure high profits from the land.³⁴ More importantly, after mapping all plots of land, the new regulations stipulated that owners must provide evidence (e.g., title to their land) to the authorities.³⁵ While large landowners reported their claims, many “partial owners, tenants, [and] squatters with traditional cultivation rights” unfamiliar with the new reporting system failed to register their land and were displaced.³⁶

As a result of the 1918 Rice Riots in Japan, caused by rice shortages and high prices, the central government set its sights on transforming Korea into a major food supplier, especially since agricultural output in Japan could no longer keep up with the rapid population growth. The Government-General initiated a thirty-year plan known as the Sanmai zōshōku keikaku (Rice Production Development Program) in the early 1920s. Im-

portation of rice from Korea, which amounted to 300,000 tons at the outbreak of the First World War, increased to 771,086 tons. The Japanese sold this imported rice at 10 percent lower than the domestic price.³⁷

Japan's demand for rice resulted in greater investment in the Korean rice industry. The replacement of traditional low-yield but drought-resistant seeds with higher-yielding seed varieties, combined with the introduction of new fertilizers and better irrigation techniques, led to a substantial increase in Korean paddy yields between 1910 and 1920. However, financial constraints caused by the agricultural recession of the 1920s coupled with discontent in Japan over “cheap imports” bought the ambitious expansion programs to an abrupt halt in 1934.³⁸

At the behest of the Japanese government, newly appointed Governor-General Ugaki Kazushige (1868–1956) devised a new agricultural policy, better known as the “cotton in the south, sheep in the north” policy.³⁹ Ugaki believed that a twenty-year plan for cotton production and a ten-year plan for sheep raising would “intensify” and “diversify” the agricultural sector.⁴⁰

However, Japan's aggressive march into China in 1937 created further rice shortages in Japan, setting in motion another policy revision, whereby Korea's agricultural sector reverted to its original task: rice production.

Impoverishment and Out-migration

The colonial government's economic and political policies had a profound impact on the countryside. Though intensification of labor, use of fertilizer, and better irrigation techniques brought about increased agricultural production during the initial phase of the rice production program, Korean agriculture “involved or at best intensified, whereas both Taiwanese and Japanese agriculture developed.”⁴¹ One consequence of the cadastral survey and the rise of market relations was a rapid increase of “landownership in the hands of a few” and a “corresponding degradation of smallholders into tenants,” which created a tenancy situation “with

few parallels in the world."⁴² The primary objective of Japanese agricultural policies, according to historian Kang Man-gil, was to transform the rural village into a supplier of food for the metropole, as well as to impede the growth of petty-middle landowners and independent farmers and to drive them into tenancy.⁴³

In 1926, a survey conducted by the *Tonga ilbo* estimated the population of Korea at approximately 23 million, and 80 percent of those in rural areas identified themselves as tenant farmers. The reporter noted that "the average yearly income of a Korean household is only 102 *wŏn*. Most farmers are impoverished, miserable, and have no fixed tenancy rights, and members of each household are hiring themselves out."⁴⁴ A 1930 Government-General survey on tenant households showed that 75 percent of farmers were in serious debt. Thus, of 2,247,194 tenant households, nearly half (1,733,797 households) had an average debt of 60 *wŏn* 50 *chŏn*.⁴⁵ Likewise, in his contemporary study of the rural crisis, Kim Il-yong noted that an average tenant household's yield, which was 391 *wŏn* 76 *chŏn* in 1929, had spiraled down to 279 *wŏn* 57 *chŏn* by 1930. Given daily expenses (principally food), landlord rents, production expenditures, tilling expenses, tenant fees, social and ceremonial expenses, and other miscellaneous expenditures, tenants' debt kept mounting.⁴⁶ By 1931, according to a study of ten hamlets conducted by the *Chosŏn ilbo*, out of 26,161 households examined, 14,293—more than half the households—averaged a debt of 106 *wŏn* 91 *chŏn*.⁴⁷

The economic depression of the 1920s created a crisis for the local rural population that, in the words of one Korean reporter, was "a hell on earth."⁴⁸ Even one Government-General study conceded that colonial economic policies had forced "Koreans [who had once] eaten rice to consume millet, who had rented a part of their house to someone else to rent rooms themselves." Their situation deteriorated further, as they went from "eating millet to the roots of grass, from renting rooms to living in tents . . . from tattered rags to nakedness." The Japanese study admitted, "[Our] economic policy has neglected the life of the Koreans."⁴⁹

The cadastral survey and the Government-General's coercive rice ag-

grandizement policy inevitably led to a destabilizing process of out-migration. The mass export of rice, better known to Korean farmers as "starvation exports," led to an increase in the output of rice while rural earnings nose-dived. As a result, the rural population became "loosened from the land," and the first Korean peasant migrants began to head to urban areas and foreign destinations like Russia, northeast China, and Japan. The *Maeil sinmun* reported as early as 1914 that Korean female workers had joined their male counterparts in the Settsu Spinning Factory in far-away Osaka.⁵⁰ A Government-General report in the 1920s attributed this dislocation to problems of *chŏllyang nongga* (food shortage), *puch'ae* (debt), and *ch'ung'unggi* (spring starvation), forcing members of households to become *ch'ulga* (one who leaves home temporarily) or *t'almong* (one who leaves the rural area for good).⁵¹ Indeed, social investigators could cite concrete figures that showed a decline in the standard of living in the rural areas. A 1927 report showed that more than 150,000 farmers had left their farms because of "spring starvation."⁵²

Out-migration involved not only adults of both sexes but also young children, many from the "rice bowl" provinces in the south.⁵³ For example, in the small hamlet of Talli in northern Kyŏngsang Province, which had fifty-nine households (a population of 250), forty men and sixteen women left their farms in search of work in 1936. Eighteen of the male migrants were eldest sons, while the female migrants were single and relatively young (between fourteen and sixteen). Strikingly, despite the out-migration of 22.4 percent of the village members, who sent remittances back home, this study concluded that families still found it difficult to subsist.⁵⁴

The contemporary literature provided a human face for the official figures and warned readers of the dangers of out-migration. For example, in Han In-t'ae's story "Young Factory Girls," rumors circulate all around the country that Naeho (a region in Hamhŭng) is to become the next El Dorado. Elderly parents, young wives, and children accompany the men in search of this golden realm. Hundreds of people, even those from the remote southern provinces, sell whatever possessions they own

to migrate to Naeho. Their efforts are in vain; the rumors turn out to be a hoax. Many migrants end up roaming the streets, and factory owners use middlemen to select workers from the lot. "This was just another quick profit scheme," the workers complain. "That is all these bastards seek." In the end, there is no gold cascading from the skies, only the unemployed who desperately try to sell their labor to the factories. The moral of the story is that going to the cities does not always guarantee employment, let alone a well-paid job.⁵⁵ Contemporaries like Kim Ungak, who idealized the peasant farmer, believed that the rural crisis had reached an extreme and reforms needed to be implemented to avert disaster: "In all honesty, besides the creator God who created life from nothing, it is the farmer [who creates life]."⁵⁶

The Impact of the Rural Crisis on Women and the Family

The rural crisis generated upheavals in the family, especially among women. The Korean press was especially drawn to the plight of ordinary rural folk who resorted to desperate means to survive the difficult economic times. The appearance of the haggard peasant woman touched even the most casual observer: "Go and observe the rural woman and you will want to howl [in anguish]."⁵⁷ Countless articles described farmers who sought to make ends meet by engaging in *hwajŏn* (slash-and-burn) agriculture in the mountains, or the numerous *yumin* (drifters) who congregated in the cities looking for work.⁵⁸ Reporters claimed that some families even sold their children into slavery or prostitution to pay off a debt or simply to reduce the number of household members.⁵⁹ Likewise, a study conducted by the *Tonga ilbo* found that the number of women engaged in the sex trade, in particular as unlicensed prostitutes in the cities, increased precipitously by the day (see table 2).⁶⁰ Though such sensational stories captured headlines, the drudgery of survival through mundane work was more characteristic of rural Korean lives.

The out-migration of peasants from the southern rice bowl regions to the cities began to change the dynamics of gender roles and the family.⁶¹

Table 2. *Number of Japanese and Korean geisha/kisaeng, prostitutes, and barmaids*

Newspaper reports	Japanese			Korean		
	<i>Geisha</i>	<i>Prostitutes</i>	<i>Barmaids</i>	<i>Kisaeng</i>	<i>Prostitutes</i>	<i>Barmaids</i>
<i>Tonga ilbo</i> , 9 May 1924	1,651	2,406	834	1,313	1,042	931
<i>Tonga ilbo</i> , 28 Sept 1927	1,702	2,178	624	1,521	1,034	941

As in most rural societies, the contribution of two partners was vital to family survival. The rhythm of the seasons, in particular during the harvest period, brought women out to the fields. The missionary Angus Hamilton observed during a trip to the countryside that "it is during the harvest that all available hands muster in the fields. The women cut the crops, the men fasten the sheaves, while the children load the rope panniers, suspended upon wooden frames from the backs of bulls."⁶²

Korean contemporaries who studied the rural crisis observed that gender roles inevitably changed with the exodus of male household members to remote places like Manchuria and Japan. Korean women not only assumed greater responsibility in the fields but were forced to carry out other tasks that had traditionally been assigned to men.⁶³ Another reporter for the *Tonga ilbo*, who had been dispatched to write about the conditions in Ansŏng County, was shocked to see women performing intensive outdoor labor: "Women never engaged in rice-planting or weeding the dry fields. That [kind] of work is for the robust men! Although they are not fond of it, they are now doing this work."⁶⁴ In fact, women had performed some of these tasks prior to Japanese colonialization.

The absence of a male householder through migration (permanent or temporary) not only forced women to assume additional work in the fields, but ensured that they would be exhausted when they had to attend

to their domestic duties. They conducted their household chores and engaged in side jobs, such as peddling sundry goods in the market or raising silkworms to ensure that every *ip* (mouth) was fed.⁶⁵ Significantly, the sudden collapse of cottage industries as a result of competition from factories deprived women of the one asset they had relied upon to supplement their resources. Many peasant women still engaged in *kilssam* (weaving by hand) of the cotton cloth that they had used since the sixteenth century to pay land taxes. A spool of yarn could be produced ten times faster by machines than by the traditional *chikcho*. As a result, the market for handicraft industries, which had provided a staple supplementary income for the family, began to dwindle, making subsistence even harder. Japanese policy to restrict rural cottage industries also contributed to the loss of this important source of income. According to Andrew Grajdanzev, "In some places [the state] forbade the use of handlooms in villages, while [in other places] handlooms were rendered useless by the obligation to use not more than ten *kin* (thirteen pounds) of yarn per person." The Japanese pursued this policy "ruthlessly . . . especially in respect to cotton and silk which were to be sold to Japanese agents at prescribed prices."⁶⁶

Though there was no shortage of slogans in the Korean countryside—like "Let's not wear rayon," a nationalist call to rural women to resist the capitalist invasion—the reality was different.⁶⁷ Little wonder that more women began to hire themselves out as laborers to supplement the family economy. For instance, in one village, women worked at the Kaesŏng Ginseng Factory for twenty to thirty *chŏn* a day. One rural wife complained that she had not had time to take a bath for an entire month, or to cut her toe- or fingernails. With some irony, she declared, "Rural women are more useful than cows. [They] are stronger and have more perseverance than cows!" In short, women had a poor choice: they could work in the fields "where men once labored" and barely eke out a living, or they could join the rural exodus to the cities.⁶⁸

New images of the laboring rural woman began to appear in the literature of the time. Though they may have simply reflected the writer's

own perceptions, they did contain important recurring themes. For example, in "Drought," Pak Hwa-sŏng depicts Sŏng-sŏp's wife as a hard-working rural woman who labors ceaselessly throughout the story. Whether grinding the barley all night with a mortar and pestle, doing laundry, or weeding in the fields, her life is pure drudgery. In one episode, friends implore Sŏng-sŏp's wife to stop pounding the barley and take a rest: "The cock has crowed for two days. What are you going to do if you get ill?" However, for Sŏng-sŏp's wife, this kind of agonizing labor means survival.⁶⁹

Notably, neither technology nor modern medicine (e.g., birth control methods) had made inroads into the countryside, and the physical burden of work began to take its toll on women's reproductive health. In his study of postpartum mothers in the rural villages, Ōno Tamotsu found that 90 percent of new mothers returned to work less than a week after giving birth. Approximately 42.7 percent of women had given birth on their own without the assistance of midwives. Moreover, 32.7 percent of all births were stillbirths, and 35 percent of babies died before age one.⁷⁰ The high infant mortality rate was detrimental to the family economy, which depended heavily on the labor of children. Given the multiple demands placed on women, children and the elderly assumed greater responsibility for domestic tasks.⁷¹ "Ten-year-olds . . . fetch the water, make the rice, and do the laundry," the *Tonga ilbo* reported. The article went on to describe "six- or seven-year-olds who take care of the babies by putting them on their backs."⁷²

Although the plight of rural women captured the sympathy of Korean intellectuals, the mass out-migration of women from the rural areas to the cities in search of better conditions was also alarming to them. As we will see in the next chapter, fears about the corruption of these "pure rural maidens" in the urban jungle fueled much debate in the press. In a typical appeal, Yi Hye-suk, a female writer, urged women to remain in the countryside: "Women of the rural villages, you are the women of this land. Those artificial women who wear powder and cream are not the [real] women of this land!"⁷³ Despite such calls, the number of young

single girls (usually between twelve and sixteen) who left the rural areas as *ch'ulga* had increased significantly by 1930.⁷⁴ Indeed, their departure had been triggered by the rural crisis in Korea, which was generated to a large extent by Japan's need to feed its population at home at the expense of the local people and to subjugate the potentially unruly peasants. These policies not only led to increased impoverishment in the countryside but also transformed traditional gender and family structures, especially with the large out-migration to the cities.

GENDER AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

Unlike the "predisposed" farm girls in Massachusetts, who entered the Lowell mills as wage earners, the large number of single girls and women who sought employment in the mills in colonial Korea had a dual sense of obligation.⁷⁵ The dual necessities of supporting their families back home and earning enough to pay the *honsu* (marriage expenses) made female workers less committed to becoming permanent wage laborers. Society gradually accepted the necessity of this intermediary stage between adolescence and marriage; for young girls, it provided the sole opportunity to secure a *honsu*. Women sought employment at factories regardless of the low wages, strenuous work, and unsanitary conditions. For married women, commuting to a factory to supplement their family income was often a necessity. In many respects, work at a factory replaced the handicraft production that had been so vital to the household economy. Adapting to the new rules and codes of the workplace was a harsh, shocking process for Korean women workers; however, their hardships in the countryside had prepared them to some degree for the rigors of factory life.

Feminized Industries and the Sexual Division of Labor

In 1910, the Government-General reported that 151 factories, mostly small to medium, were fully operational, with a mixed workforce of 8,203.

By 1919, the number of factories had increased to 1,900 with a total workforce of 48,705.⁷⁶ In 1922, women comprised 20.4 percent of the total workforce (9,849); by 1936, 50,550 women, 33.3 percent of the workforce, worked in 5,937 factories.⁷⁷ Though these numbers might appear relatively modest, only eleven cities had a population of 14,000 in 1910. In the case of Kyöngsöng (Seoul), where 24 percent of the factories were located, there was a major demographic shift, as the population increased from 246,251 in 1914 to 929,872 in 1940.⁷⁸

Like their counterparts in Europe, Korean female workers dominated light industries, such as textile and food-processing factories. However, the industrialization of Korea did not produce the "feminization" of certain factories—that is, the incursion of women into traditionally male-dominated arenas and the displacement of men from their positions. Unlike Europe, where feminization had led to fierce confrontations as men sought to protect their work from becoming defined as "women's work," select industries in Korea were feminized almost from the moment they were created (see table 3).⁷⁹

Korean women dominated certain industries by the 1920s and 1930s. The statistics were quite striking: in 1921, female workers constituted 63.4 percent of the textile industry and 89.9 percent of the silk-reeling sector.⁸⁰ These numbers increased annually. There were other interesting features about female labor in the Government-General reports. A survey of 196 factories that employed fifty or more workers showed that female laborers worked the longest hours.⁸¹ Moreover, a large number of women were married, unlike their counterparts in Europe, who were usually single. According to a survey conducted in 1930, roughly 80.8 percent of female workers in the chemical industries listed themselves as married.⁸² Moreover, by 1936, more than 60.6 percent of female workers in textile factories with more than one hundred workers were illiterate.⁸³

The sexual division of labor required conscious social engineering to obtain maximal results. Cultural ideas about the family and gender could be manipulated to justify employment practices. Employers described

Table 3. Breakdown of jobs by age and gender

Type of job	Factories	Workers below 16		Workers 16 to 50		Workers over 50		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Textile								
Silk-reeling	80	74	3,805	667	5,234	1	20	
Cotton fabric	24	80	661	898	1,277	1	1	
Silk fabric	15	6	36	113	341	0	0	
Knit fabric	53	250	80	707	257	6	3	
Cotton ginning	39	31	36	706	1,694	13	22	
	240	444	4,703	3,274	9,039	32	6	17,527
Metal	225	223	0	2,452	18	46	0	2,739
Machinery	218	163	0	3,813	1	53	2	3,402
Ceramics	314	224	7	5,120	373	108	4	5,856
Chemical	392	176	146	4,614	3,995	141	6	9,378
Lumber	152	128	23	2,942	36	29	1	3,159
Printing	208	271	4	3,778	64	31	0	4,148
Food processing	1,950	275	664	18,383	1,947	306	204	24,756
Gas/electric	75	0	0	815	0	0	13	838
Other	235	425	394	3,366	1,000	112	19	5,316
TOTAL	4,009	2,326	6,241	47,927	19,473	847	295	77,109

SOURCE: Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nempō* (1929), 192-97.

labor-intensive tasks in the factories as having inherently gendered qualities. In essence, they sought to justify the new gendered division of labor by arguing that nature had organized these roles according to gender traits. The industrialists argued that specific tasks required physical attributes like "delicate and nimble fingers," and traits like patience, agility, sharpness, and endurance, which were typical of females.⁸⁴ For instance, piecers needed supple fingers to repiece the broken threads back onto the spinning machines, a task rural women could easily adapt to because of their familiarity with weaving.⁸⁵ "Go and see for yourself," wrote one reporter. "The female worker's hand speed is unbelievable! You cannot follow their hand [movement] with your eyes! This requires dexterity!"⁸⁶ "Weaving is all about delicate hands," and it requires practice like that of soldiers, observed another journalist assigned to report on the Kyōngsōng Textile Company's apprentice school in Yongdūngp'o.⁸⁷ Before the steam-powered looms could crank out hundreds of feet of silk, they required the tolerance and patience of female workers to fish the silk threads from scalding water, and delicate hands to coil the "silk threads as thin as a spider's web."⁸⁸ Yi Sōng-hwan recalled his visit to a silk-reeling factory: "Anyone who goes there will get to know everything. . . . [F]emale workers as young as twelve or thirteen years old put their bare 'slender' hands into the scalding water to pull out the threads." The indispensable female trait of docility allegedly made it possible for women workers to work in very humid conditions, even during the dog days of summer, "for the sake of maintaining the gloss on the threads."⁸⁹

Another essential trademark of the female textile worker was her ability to stand all day yet be alert enough to make sure that "a thousand strands of thread do not get tangled."⁹⁰ She then had to coil the fragile threads carefully "around a flat wooden-like spoon."⁹¹ "Only the 'docile female' [*sunsilhan yōja*] could do this kind of work," a reporter noted during his tour of the Kyōngsōng Textile Factory. "It is because they are from rural areas, they are 'naturally' accustomed to knitting and do not think of it as tedious"; despite the humid conditions and the putrid stench of rotting cocoons, they "hardly argue with Mayumi-san, the Japanese fore-

man."⁹² Not surprisingly, female workers were also assigned tasks that were monotonous and repetitive—in other words, they occupied the least skilled jobs. Women who worked in the rice mills had the unenviable task of picking out rocks and unhulled rice one at a time, “like sparrows looking for insects”—a task that required the female trait of patience.⁹³ In many factories, employers assigned female workers the role of preparing raw materials for the machines.

Industrialization also exploited the domestic ideal to naturalize certain relations. Whereas a factory manager assigned male workers to operate the lathe or service the steam boilers (both relatively new skills that required some training and were not analogous to any premodern trade), female workers were always assigned tasks deemed “naturally suitable” to them. By deploying cultural stereotypes, industrialists called upon female workers to perform tasks analogous to “things done at home.” Thus industrialists suggested that certain factory tasks were simply an extension of domestic duties. The only difference, according to a survey of workers conducted by the *Chosŏn ilbo*, was that workers now had to adapt to the speed of the machines.⁹⁴

Assumptions about female work were formalized and institutionalized in various ways. Korean female workers from the rural areas did not become accustomed to factory work overnight and had to be “disciplined” into it. Disciplinary measures of this new capitalist economy were not confined to the shop floor, but also intruded into Korean daily life. The movement of females from the household economy to the factory invariably upset the rhythms of traditional life, as the factory assumed control over the women’s daily calendar. Most striking was the rapid disappearance of rural handicraft skills, as women no longer had the time or incentive to pursue such activities. At the same time, factory work pushed women into monotonous tasks. The disassociation of the labor process from particular skills meant that female workers no longer needed to have a real understanding of work. By developing and naturalizing an automatic and mechanical instinct among workers, factories could easily allocate tasks to different groups of workers.

Government-General factory surveys often heralded the vast technological advancements of Japanese capitalism. For example, if the average horsepower utilized at a factory in Keijō (Seoul) registered at 10.8 in 1931, by 1939 it had increased to 152.5 or fourteenfold.⁹⁵ Indeed, by 1940, industrial output in Korea had surpassed agricultural output.⁹⁶

Though factories, by their nature, produce standardized behavior, factory owners soon learned that all women workers complied equally with the needs of the industry. Age, marital status, the number of children, and the presence or absence of male support were also important in determining if a woman would be “obedient to the laws of the factory and the manager’s instructions.”⁹⁷ According to the Government-General annual report in 1929, of the 26,009 documented female workers, 6,241 were under sixteen years old. The average age of a female worker in the silk-reeling industry was sixteen.⁹⁸ However, Kwŏn T’ae-hwan notes that the number of girls from ten to fourteen leaving rural villages for the cities increased significantly between 1925 and 1935, and many juveniles began to work in textile mills.⁹⁹ Because of the cramped working space, managers used children to climb into engines to clean the machines. Many contemporaries highlighted the widespread use and abuse of children in the textile industry as the worst of the many exploitative features of Japanese colonialism. One writer lamented: “What is worse is that [our] children [are] ‘purchased machines’ used for profit!”¹⁰⁰ Factories favored children, much like female workers, because of their docility and dexterity.

Industrialization in Korea also transformed the language of labor. Workers became exposed to a new corporate jargon, which judged their work in terms of “efficiency,” “costs,” “rates,” “speed,” “competition,” and so forth. Switching from task-based time to clock time proved extremely difficult, especially for rural migrant workers. It was a coercive measure by which work flowed to the laborers and not vice versa.¹⁰¹ By breaking down production into minutes and assigning each worker a task, managers could increase productivity and optimize the labor of workers.

If a worker, in a moment of carelessness or fatigue, was hurt on the shop floor, managers treated her like a defective cog and quickly replaced

her. Because of the abundance of workers, periodic replacements ensured "fresh parts." Likewise, a struggling factory could lay off its workers at any time. According to Chông Un-bing, ten or more workers were suddenly discharged from the Chongno "S" Socks Factory. They had been working there for more than fifteen years, but the style of shoes that went with their socks was no longer in demand. "It is understandable from the financial standpoint of the factory," Chông wrote, "but on the other hand, it is not that simple."¹⁰²

Feminized Industries and Working Conditions

Precarious employment was only one of the risks borne by female workers. In primary feminized industries in Korea—the food processing, textile, and chemical industries—the working conditions for female workers were abysmal. Korean women's inferior position in these industries was based on both gender and nationality.

FOOD PROCESSING

In 1919, rice mills constituted more than 23 percent of the total number of factories.¹⁰³ The large number of rice mills reflected the state's intent to develop Korea into a principal supplier of rice. Of the 5,172 women hired in the food processing industry in 1921, 91.5 percent worked at the rice mills. Some tasks assigned to female workers mirrored their traditional roles in the fields, albeit in a mechanized setting. For example, the factory used female workers to sift through the harvested rice to remove stalks and foreign materials (i.e., dirt, stones, twigs) from the rough rice—a task women performed in the countryside. Mechanized factories with steam power performed the hulling and whitening (polishing) of the rice. As one female worker explained, "Rice spilled like an avalanche from the second floor. . . . The entire room would be filled with dust." In this factory, female workers, lined up cheek-by-jowl, assumed the monotonous task of sorting the polished rice on a glass plate.¹⁰⁴

Not only were working conditions arduous, but wages were extremely

low—below subsistence level. One worker complained: "We work from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., and earn [only] 60 *chôn*."¹⁰⁵ To exacerbate the situation, working in the rice mills was a seasonal occupation. Many factories simply laid off their workers in October after the autumn harvest, closed down the plant, and began rehiring in early February. According to a Government-General report, rice mills operated for roughly 130 days during the year.¹⁰⁶ A worker could hardly subsist in this sector of the economy without more steady work to carry her through lulls. It is not surprising, therefore, that rice mills were staffed primarily by married women looking to supplement their family's income.

THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

The textile industry was a profitable enterprise for Japanese investors, who exploited the cheap labor and goods to increase their profits. During the first half of the colonial period, Japanese entrepreneurs concentrated their investments in the silk-reeling industry. By the late 1930s, they had channeled their investments into the cotton industry, and by 1940, rayon had become the most favored industry for investment.¹⁰⁷

The textile industries, in particular the silk-reeling factories, provided the most stable employment for female workers. Silk-reeling factories not only hired the greatest number of female workers but also had the highest retention rate. According to a Government-General survey in 1938, 22.3 percent of the women remained in the factory for one to two years.¹⁰⁸ One journalist posited that these factories preferred to hire young, single females because "they were weak, docile, and cheap."¹⁰⁹ The number of female workers in the textile industries remained relatively consistent until Japan's war with China in 1937, when the state quickly shifted from light to heavy industry to support the war effort.¹¹⁰

The division of labor in the textile industry and the scale of operation were much more complex than in other sectors of the economy. Hosoi Wakizō points out that aside from the "eight major processes, eighteen subprocesses, eighteen different types of additional jobs/tasks and auxiliary processes, and chief supporting divisions (i.e., repair and mainte-

nance), an average factory had a total of fifty to seventy different tasks.¹¹¹ There was little hesitation in assigning female workers the most labor-intensive and dangerous tasks, which managers claimed could only be accomplished by those with feminine attributes. Silkworm cocoons, usually twenty-eight days old, were simmered in hot water to kill the chrysalis and loosen the sericin (glue), freeing the silk filaments. With their "supple" bare hands, female workers would fish for filaments, while at the same time trying to keep the thread continuous with an even thickness. Cocoons could have a thick surface with nothing inside or a thin surface with a thick body. Experienced workers knew which cocoon to fish for, while neophytes burned their hands extracting fruitless cocoons. Naturally, managers determined the wages by the quantity of silk strings fished from each cocoon, the gloss of the filament, and the thickness. The filaments were then attached to a spindle ready for spinning.

By the end of the 1930s, 88.4 percent of all silk-reeling factories had power looms. The Toyoda model 38 power loom with a more narrow iron or wood loom was much more durable than the traditional looms, and a weaver could operate six to seven looms at one time.¹¹² Filaments often snapped because of the tension and the speed of the looms. Workers had to quickly reconnect the strings, and this required alertness, dexterity, and patience—qualities that only women possessed, according to factory employers.¹¹³ As we will see, such labor-intensive and dangerous working conditions were conducive to catastrophic accidents. No amount of feminine attributes could save inexperienced or even seasoned workers from burns and other injuries.

Textile factory recruiters sought to secure signatures from individuals who deceptively posed as parents with legal guardianship over the young girls. When a worker tried to bring in real authority figures (such as real parents, friends, and teachers) to resolve issues at the factory, the managers rejected their intervention, claiming that their names did not match the initial signature on the work contract. Han In-t'aek captured the consequences of this deception and abuse in his novel *Young Factory Girls*. A friend of Mr. W who arrives to visit the protagonist, Kūmsōm,

at the Hamhūng XX Silk-Reeling Factory has to argue for more than thirty minutes with the factory manager before being allowed to see her. The manager initially refuses because he is "not the parent or relative" who had signed the contract.¹¹⁴ By signing contracts, female workers were often conned into working long periods of time.

THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

Among the various chemical-based industries (rayon, fertilizer, and rubber), the rubber shoe industry hired the most female workers. The majority of rubber factories were located in Pusan, Kyōngsōng (Seoul), and P'yōngyang. Altering the shape of the *komusin* (rubber shoes) to resemble the traditional *chipsin* (straw shoes) for men and the *kosin* (pointed traditional *pōsōn*) for women, with its narrow toe and wide heel, proved to be a huge success for entrepreneur Yi Byōng-tu.¹¹⁵

As rubber shoes became more popular and affordable than leather shoes, especially among young people, more businessmen began to invest in the industry and the number of factories increased. The number of factories increased from two in 1921 to seventy-two in 1933, with a net value of 9,845,000 *wōn*.¹¹⁶ The rubber industry started hiring female workers, ranging in age from sixteen to forty. According to one employee, the majority of workers were "mothers who left their crying babies at home," women "with swollen breasts," and emaciated women in their forties.¹¹⁷ A survey conducted by the *Chosōn chi kwang* in 1928 and a report conducted by the Government-General in 1935 (showing that 65.8 percent of the workforce were married) confirmed the large number of married women in the rubber factories.¹¹⁸

As in many mixed factories, there was a strict sexual division of labor. In most cases, male workers worked with the masticators or rollers and solvents to break down the polymer chains for vulcanization. Female workers participated in stirring and kneading the rubber in the vats after the solvents were added, but most were assigned to make the molds or assemble the soles. An experienced worker could make forty to fifty pairs a day, while a novice would complete roughly half that amount. Fe-

male workers often complained about the strain on their arms. Every time a sole was attached by the riveter, the finisher had to press down on the sole. Managers often penalized workers for any unevenness.¹¹⁹

The stress of producing perfect shoes paled in comparison to the psychological and physical stress of being a working mother. Although the number of communal or private *t'akaso*, or nurseries, was increasing, the majority of working women still had to bear the burden of rearing their children as well as providing income for the family.¹²⁰ Workers often carried infants on their backs, and one journalist reported her incredulity at seeing mothers breastfeed their babies in factories reeking of rubber fumes that were no doubt detrimental to their health.¹²¹ For mothers who could not take their children to the factories, the mother-in-law or someone else in the household would bring the infant during break time for nursing.¹²² Militant strikes for more breastfeeding time became quite prevalent among rubber workers, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

WAGES

To determine the wages of workers during the colonial period, historians have generally relied on the Government-General's records. However, the pay listed on paper was often higher than the real wages paid to workers, making the records highly unreliable. In the case of the rubber shoe industry, factories suspended operations for months during financial recessions or in the event of overproduction, causing a decline in the payment of wages.¹²³ The months from July to December marked the peak season for rubber shoe sales, because people purchased them as gifts for the harvest festival and other events. One year, the P'yŏngyang Rubber factory produced six million pairs of rubber shoes based on the previous year's sales; however, it only sold two million pairs, forcing the plant to suspend operations until May of the following year.¹²⁴ Workers put in more hours from July to December (twenty-six days per month) than from January to March (fifteen days per month), so their salaries



5. A textile factory.



6. A rice mill.

varied from month to month; as a result, the so-called average-wage index produced by the colonial government, which did not take into account special circumstances like cyclical downturns or periodic unemployment, was neither precise nor consistent. In the case of the rubber and silk-reeling factories, for instance, the data on wages did not reflect these irregularities.¹²⁵

Factory owners resorted to other tactics to reduce wages and cut into the earnings of workers, who already suffered from the fluctuations of supply and demand and the instability of seasonal work. First, through a draconian system of *kangje chŏgŭm*, or forced savings, owners could withhold wages for a long period, often the duration of the worker's contract, keeping the wages in a savings account. Forced savings not only kept capital in the hands of the factory but assured managers that workers would remain for the duration of their promised contracts. If a worker decided to leave before his or her contract ended, the manager could keep whatever was left in the forced savings account. In the case of the Taech'ang Woven Goods Factory, managers hired workers for five years, knowing that many would quit before their contract ended; naturally they did not return any of the forced savings money to their workers.¹²⁶ Managers also kept a strict log of the number of days a worker showed up for work and could use it as a basis for deducting money from a worker's forced savings, on the pretext that the worker did not serve the full number of promised days.

Employers also resorted to the unscrupulous practice of meting out fines as punishment. The *pŏlgŭm chedo*, or penalty-fine system, not only deducted wages from workers and increased production, but also created competition among workers. Since workers did not have the right to file grievances, managers could withhold wages indefinitely. One common excuse for withholding wages was the poor quality of the product a worker produced. For example, in the textile industry, a worker's wages were determined by the gloss of the silk thread. A woman worker who worked at the Katakura Silk-Reeling Factory in Taegu complained that about seven hundred female workers in the three factories were not only sub-

jected to unreasonable working conditions and terrible pay, but also judged according to the perfection of the product. Managers would levy a fine for any defect or mistake, making it practically impossible to make money. She complained bitterly that "after all that stress and excessive work, you end up with nothing, just debt."¹²⁷ Yuk Ji-su (1907-67), a professor at Yŏnhŭi College, notes that while most managers at the textile factories levied fines and blamed their workers for carelessness or lack of attention, in most cases (80 percent of the time), the failure to produce a first-grade product was due not to human error but to breakdown of the loom or inferiority of the silk threads.¹²⁸ Even if one did produce first-grade products on a daily basis, if one did not have a good rapport with the manager, "he would find a way to deduct wages."¹²⁹ The penalty system that forced female workers into debt proved to be a very effective control mechanism.

Even if female workers were able to save some money from their meager incomes, it was highly unlikely that all their remittances were sent home. Dorm inspectors often confiscated letters that contained money. A more common problem involved incoming girls who out of naïveté asked these inspectors to send their remittances home for them.¹³⁰ Needless to say, many of their families failed to receive the money. Female workers considered it their filial duty to work and save money to send back home. In fact, they justified their absence from home based on their duty to support their families. At the same time, they often voiced frustration, usually directed at their younger siblings, whom they believed had no appreciation of their sacrifices at the mills. As Kang Yang-sun, a textile worker, wrote to her siblings: "Do you know how hard I am working to pay for your education and to take care of our mother? Six years have already passed, and I still get up at six in the morning every day." Although Kang claimed that she felt no resentment toward her siblings and did not expect any monetary compensation in the future, she still wanted them to know the price of their comfort and the cost to her physical health: "All of my compatriots are toiling away, drenched in sweat, gasping for air, and our backs and legs are aching."¹³¹ Despite the fatigue

and sense of unfairness, the importance of supporting the family outweighed the suffering and physical toil at the factory. However, there was little left to send home in remittances after they paid their room and board, settled their penalty fines, and gave up a portion of their meager wages to the manager's forced savings accounts.

Another problem involved apprenticeship. Managers expected novices to serve three months to a year as apprentices. Although room and board was covered, the managers did not pay their workers during this time. In silk-reeling factories, for example, an average apprenticeship lasted six months.¹³² During this time, an apprentice who put in thirteen hours at a spinning factory would be left with only one or two *wŏn* a month.¹³³ Han San-yŏ, a woman who began working at a tobacco factory when she was seventeen years old, attested to the difficulty of saving money: "I get up at four in the morning every day and spend my entire day wrapping cigarettes. I get paid 3 *chŏn* for wrapping ninety packs."¹³⁴ Those working at rubber shoe factories also complained about the long hours of work, the terrible pay, "and those penalty fines." A juvenile female worker who worked from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. at the same factory concurred: "A single flawed shoe results in a big fine, usually worth half a day's work."¹³⁵

While both married and single women felt enormous pressure to send remittances home to support their families, single women experienced the added burden of saving money for their *honsu* (marriage expenses). As a result of competition, women workers were not always amicable as each sought ways to earn an extra *wŏn*. A young female worker, frustrated with her low pay, felt that if she did not "curry favor with the manager" like some of the other girls, she would not be able to get her day's pay.¹³⁶

The Government-General's price indices from 1926 to 1930 reveal that factories did not make any effort to increase the wages of their workers as the level of consumer prices consistently rose. If an item cost 29.3 *wŏn* in 1926, it would cost 36.23 *wŏn* in 1930.¹³⁷ A study conducted by the South Manchurian Railroad Company in 1933 noted that a monthly diet of barley, chestnut, and millet for a family of five cost between 15 and 21 *wŏn*.¹³⁸ Five years earlier, an *Tonga ilbo* survey noted that a monthly

diet of only millet and salt for a family of three or four actually cost 20–25 *wŏn*. A single worker with the same diet would have to pay 9–12 *wŏn* a month, more than 70 percent of his or her wages.¹³⁹ Indeed, a simple computation of the average monthly pay of adult female workers at rubber and silk-reeling factories (roughly 12 *wŏn*) in 1932 minus penalty fines and remittances equaled an unsustainable living wage. In short, a worker could barely eke out a living for herself, let alone have enough to send money home without great sacrifice

Thirty-five years of colonial rule brought about significant economic and social transformations in Korea, including the establishment of several industries, the development of a modern financial sector, and the reorganization of agriculture. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, the changes that were set in motion both by exogenous shifts in the political economy and Government-General policies had profound consequences. These discursive processes challenged traditional gender relations and hierarchies in the family, workplace, and political sphere.

The exodus of thousands of young women and men from the rural areas to factories and mines in the cities not only had tremendous demographic and social implications but it destabilized notions of the natural division of labor, both in the city and in the countryside. As Raymond Williams has aptly noted, the "men and women who came from the country to the cities did not need to be told what they had lost, any more than they needed to be told what they might struggle to gain in their new world."¹⁴⁰ Migrants left the gaze of the rural community, only to be placed under the strict, often unforgiving surveillance of the modern factory. Control through a gendered division of labor, meager wages, long working hours, and even physical containment in dormitories proved profitable for the colonial state but detrimental to the well-being of the new Korean female workers. While the Korean press conscientiously portrayed these workers as victims of the greedy state, it also expressed ambivalence about the new female worker, who expressed discontent and independence, and challenged the social order. She justified

her presence in the factories with references to her filial piety and her duty to support her family. At the same time, as we will see in the next chapter, the woman worker dared to express discontent with harsh working conditions. As women became more unruly in the eyes of both factory owners and educated society, the public began to debate the fate of the uncontrolled female worker. That discourse about class and race redefined and reconstituted the sexual domain of labor.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discoursing in Numbers

The Female Worker and the Politics of Gender

The prominence of the woman worker . . . came not so much from an increase in their numbers or a change in the location, quality or quantity of her work, as from contemporaries' preoccupation with gender as a sexual division of labor. This preoccupation was not caused by objective conditions of industrial development; rather, it helped shape those conditions, giving relations of production their gendered form, women workers their secondary status, and home and work, reproduction and production, their oppositional meanings.

Joan Scott, "The Woman Worker in the
Nineteenth Century"

On 29 May 1931, as the sun slowly began to rise east of the Taedong River, morning commuters noticed the silhouette of a woman standing on top of the octagonal roof of the Ŭlmildae. The famous pavilion in P'yŏngyang was visible for miles because of its strategic location on the cliffs of the Ŭlmil-i Hill on Moran Peak. As people gathered around the pavilion, the woman began to voice her grievances against the P'yŏngwŏn Rubber Factory. For nine hours before her arrest, she denounced the abysmal working conditions and the plans for steep wage decreases

lation and medical investigation to that of political practice. Biomedical schemes for boosting the 'quality and quantity' of the population came to inform state legalization and administration, creating policies that focused largely on women and their role in reproduction." Lynne Frame, "Gretchen, Girl, Garçonne? Weimar Science and Popular Culture in Search of Ideal Woman," in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture*, ed. Katharine Von Ankum (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 14.

151. Lamarckian eugenics emphasized changes in the environment, such that these changes would be passed down to future generations biologically. If men and women had the same education, for example, "their natures would converge more rapidly." See Ellen Key, *The Century of the Children* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909); Allen Buchanan, Dan W. Brock, Norman Daniels, and Daniel Wilker, *From Chance to Choice: Genetics and Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 30–31.

152. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 29 May 1930.

153. *Tonga ilbo*, 25–27 Jan. 1929; *Chosŏn ilbo*, 20–24 May 1930.

154. Yi Kap-su, "Usaenghakchŏk sana chehan non" [Discourse on eugenical birth control], *Sin yŏsŏng* (August 1933), 76–79.

155. *Aigo* and *nikutai* in Japanese.

156. Kudo Takeki, "Jidō aigo no konpon mondai" [The fundamental problem of *aigo* in children], *Chōsen shakai jigyo* 8–5 (1930), cited in Kim Hye-gyŏng, "Ilcheha ōrinigi ūi hyōngsŏng kwa kajok pyōnhwa e kwanhan yŏn'gu" [A study of the formation of childhood and the transformation of the Korean family under Japanese colonial rule] (Ph.D. diss., Ewha Womans University, 1997), 75.

157. Kim Myōng-hŭi, "Sip'yŏng" [Comments on current events], *Sin yŏsŏng* (Jan. 1925), 10.

158. Idong chwadam, "Nae ka isang hanŭn namp'yŏn" [My ideal type of husband], *Sin yŏsŏng* (Dec. 1932), 46.

159. Yi Sŏng-hwan, "Kin'gŭp tongŭi hamnida: Nongch'on yŏsŏng munje e taehayŏ" [An urgent consensus is needed: Regarding the problems of women in the rural villages], *Sin yŏsŏng* (Jan. 1925), 4–9.

160. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 10 May 1929.

161. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 28 May–14 June 1930.

162. Pak Yong-hae, "Sana chojŏl ūi sahoejŏk koch'al" [A social inquiry into regulating childbirth], *Hak Chi kwang* (Aug. 1930), cited in So Hyŏn-suk, "Ilche singminji sigi chosŏn ūi ch'ulsan t'ongje tamnon ūi yŏn'gu," 17.

163. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 28 May, 6 June 1930.

164. *Maeil sinbo*, 28 Dec. 1929.

165. *Tonga ilbo*, 18–19 Nov. 1929.

166. Yi Kwang-su, "Mosŏng" [Motherhood], *Yŏsŏng* (May 1936), 12–13.

167. Nam Sang-hŭi, "Sana chehan" [Birth control], *Kat'ollik chŏngnyŏn* (Feb.–March 1934), 10–11.

168. Chōsen Sōtokufu Gakumyukyoku Shakaika, "Ninsampu hogo ni kan suru chōsa" [A study concerning the protection of expecting and nursing mothers], *Chōsen shakai jigyo* 11 (1933): 53.

169. Pak Ho-jin, "Sana chehan ūi chŏlgyu" [A call for birth control], *Samch'ŏlli* (April 1930), cited in So Hyŏn-suk, "Ilche singminji sigi chosŏn ūi ch'ulsan t'ongje tamnon ūi yŏn'gu," 17.

170. Kim Ki-jŏn, "Anhae e taehan hŭimang, anhae e taehan pulp'yŏn" [Regarding the expectations and inconveniences of a wife], *Sin yŏsŏng* (April 1931), 78–80.

171. "Myōngnyu puin kwa sana chehan" [Renowned wives and birth control], *Samch'ŏlli* (Sept. 1930), 23–25.

3. THE FEMALE WORKER

1. The author was best known for "Chŏlmŭn ōmŏni" [The young mother]—a collaborative effort with Pak Hwa-sŏng, Kang Kyŏng-ae, Ch'oe Chŏng-hŭi, and Kim Hye-ja—which was serialized in the journal *Sin kajŏng* [New family] from January to April 1931.

2. By the 1920s, Korean writers split into two ideological camps: national and class literature. Kwŏn Yŏngmin notes that the writers' obsession with class struggle inevitably "took on a fixed pattern with stereotyped main characters" and "focused mostly on the organized struggle and mass resistance of the working class." Kwŏn argues that it is difficult to find works that embody "the positive meaning of labor or the true value of a worker's life." Many proletarian writers joined Kim Ki-jin (1903–1985) and Pak Yŏng-hŭi's (1901–?) Chosŏn p'ŭrollet'aria yesul tongmaeng-Korea artista proleta federatio (KAPF). See Kwŏn Yŏngmin, "Early Twentieth-Century Fiction by Men" in *A History of Korean Literature*, ed. Peter Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 390–411.

3. In Sŭng-hyŏn, *Han'guk nodong sosŏl chŏnjip* (1930–1932) [Collection of Korean working-class novels], vol. 2 (Seoul: Pogosa, 1995), 273.

4. *Ibid.*, 274.

5. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 138.

6. Yi Hyo-jae, *Chosŏnjo sahoe wa kajok* [Society and family in the Chosŏn dynasty] (Seoul: Hanŭl, 2003), 151.
7. Kim Sŏng-hŭi, "Chŏnt'ong sahoe yŏsŏng ŭi sajŏk yŏngyŏk kwa kongjŏk yŏngyŏksŏ ŭi nodong" [Women's labor in the private and public spheres in traditional Korean society], *Ham'guk kajŏng kwalli hak hoeji* 20, no. 6 (2002): 25-36.
8. Kim, Sang-ŏk. *Yi Nŭng-hwa chŏnjip: Chosŏn yŏsokko* [Complete works of Yi Nŭng-hwa: Korean folk women]. (Seoul: Tosŏ ch'ulp'ansa, 1990), 383.
9. Yi Hyo-jae. *Chosŏnjo sahoe wa kajok*, 157.
10. Kim Sŏng-hŭi, "Chŏnt'ong sahoe yŏsŏng ŭi sajŏk yŏngyŏk kwa kongjŏk yŏngyŏksŏ ŭi nodong," 33.
11. Ibid., 34. The *Taedongpŏp* (universal land tax law) stipulated that for each adult male, the state could levy up to two rolls of cotton cloth, equivalent to twelve *tu* of rice.
12. Ibid., 32.
13. Ibid.
14. Yi Chun-gu, *Chosŏn sidae yŏsŏng ŭi il kwa saenghwal* [Women's work and livelihood during the Chosŏn period] (Seoul: Ch'ŏngnyŏnŏsa, 1999), 191.
15. Kim Sang-ŏk, *Chosŏn yŏsokko*, 382-83.
16. Kim Sŏng-hŭi, "Chŏnt'ong sahoe yŏsŏng ŭi sajŏk yŏngyŏk kwa kongjŏk yŏngyŏksŏ ŭi nodong," 33-34.
17. Kim Sang-ŏk, *Chosŏn yŏsokko*, 368, 370.
18. Frank M. Brockman, "Some of the Problems of Industrial Education in Korea," *Korean Mission Field* 7 (July 1910): 172.
19. Ibid.
20. *Maeil sinmun*, 8 Feb. 1913.
21. Takahashi Kamekichi. *Gendai chŏsen keizai ron* [A discourse on the economy of contemporary Korea] (Tokyo: Chikura Shobō, 1935), 346.
22. H. Rosovsky and K. Ohkawa, "A Century of Japanese Economic Growth," in *The State and Economic Enterprise in Japan: Essays in the Political Economy of Growth*, ed. William W. Lockwood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 77-83.
23. Mikiso Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), 12.
24. Kozo Yamamura, "The Japanese Economy, 1911-1930: Concentration, Conflicts, and Crises," in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, ed. Bernard S. Silberman and H. D. Harootian (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1999), 300.

25. Ibid., 302.

26. Ibid.

27. More than half a million Koreans participated in nationwide demonstrations. For more on the March First Movement, see Frank Baldwin Jr., "The March First Movement: Korean Challenge and Japanese Response" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1969).

28. The Chōsen Kaisha Rei (Company law of Korea), drafted in 1910, restricted both Japanese and Koreans from creating modern industrial factories. It was abolished in March 1920.

29. "The Exporters Association Law created export unions [*yushutsu kumiai*] in particular product lines among the medium and smaller enterprises. It authorized these associations to accept products for export on consignment from members, and to control quantities, qualities, and prices of export goods." See Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle: The Growth of Industrial Policy, 1925-1975* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 98. Soon-won Park, *Colonial Industrialization and Labor in Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999).

30. The Nihon Ginkō (Bank of Japan) and six *nōkō ginkō* (regional agricultural and industrial banks), most notably the Chōsen shokusan ginkō (Industrial Bank of Chōsen), provided credits and low interest rates to these *zaibatsu* (conglomerates) to construct large modern factories for production. This "mighty trio" monitored all investments with great efficiency and latitude, ensuring that their projects moved "swiftly and sequentially." See Jung-en Woo, *Race to the Swift: State and Finance in Korean Industrialization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 19-42.

31. Carter Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism 1876-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 49.

32. Ta Chen, "The Labor Situation in Korea" U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics 31, no. 5 (Nov. 1930): 26.

33. The Land Tax Law of 1914 levied a tax on all landowners. See Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981): 41. The cadastral survey served more as a means of enhancing the legibility of existing land ownership patterns. It was really the operation of economic forces that was most responsible for land-tenure change during the colonial period. These legible blueprints of indigenous practices made it easier for companies like the Oriental Development Company (chartered in 1907) to re-

organize agriculture efficiently in the countryside. See Edwin H. Gragert, *Landownership under Colonial Rule: Korea's Japanese Experience 1900-1935* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

34. The competition for tenancy rights and higher rents transferred more of the production costs to tenants, guaranteeing high profits.

35. Kang Man-gil, *Singminji sigi sahoe kyŏngje han'guksa* [Social and economic history of Korea during the colonial period] (Seoul: Han'gilsa, 1994), 221.

36. Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History* (Cambridge, MA: Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990), 265.

37. Kozo Yamamura, "The Japanese Economy, 1911-1930," 304. By the end of the 1920s, 40 percent of the total rice production being exported to Japan came from Korea. See Bruce F. Johnstone, *Japanese Food Management in World War II* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1953), 51.

38. Sang-chul Suh, *Growth and Structural Changes in the Korean Economy, 1910-1940* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 34.

39. The policy of *Nammyŏn pugyang* (Cotton in the south, sheep in the north) was also referred to as *Puksŏn kaech'ŏk* (Cultivating the northern frontiers) and *San'gŭm changryŏ* (Promoting gold mining). See Kang Man-gil, *Singminji sigi sahoe kyŏngje han'guksa*, 294.

40. Andrew J. Grajdanzev, *Modern Korea* (New York: John Day Company, 1944), 93.

41. Gi-Wook Shin, *Peasant Protest and Social Change in Colonial Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 45.

42. Bruce Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 43.

43. Kang Man-gil, *Ilcheha pinmin saenghwal yŏn'gu* [A study on the livelihood of the poor under Japanese colonial rule] (Seoul: Ch'angjak kwa pip'yŏng ch'ulp'ansa, 1987), 23, 105.

44. *Tonga ilbo*, 8 Dec. 1926.

45. Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no kosaku kankō* [Tenancy customs in Korea] (Keijō, 1930), 146. By the end of 1927, an average household comprised five people. See Ch'oe Kwang-mo, "Chosŏn ūi nong'ŏp hyŏnsang" [The condition of agriculture in Korea], *Nongmin* (Sept. 1930), 4-5.

46. Kim Il-yong, "Chosŏn nongch'on kyŏngje ūi chŏnmyŏnjŏk koch'al" [An extensive study of the Korean rural economy], *Nongmin* (June 1931), 11-13.

47. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 12 April 1931. According to a study conducted by Himeno Minoru, 68.1 percent of farmers classified themselves as tenants in 1930, and 48.3 percent of farmers suffered from "spring starvation." See Himeno Minoru, *Chō-*

sen keizai zuhyō [A chart of Korea's economy] (Keijō: Chōsen Tōkei Kyōkai, 1940), 191. More than 60 percent of farmers could not pay taxes in 1935. See Fuji Chōjiro, "Chōsen musan Kaikyō kenkyū" [A study of the propertyless class in Korea], *Chōsen oyobi manshū* (May 1935), 95.

48. *Chung'oe ilbo*, 7 June 1925.

49. Chōsen Sōtokufu Kambō Bunshoka Murayama Chijun Chōsa, *Chōsen no genron to sesō* [Views and social conditions in Korea] (Keijō, 1927), 82-83.

50. Bruce Cumings notes that it was in the aftermath of the cadastral survey (1910-1918) that the first great migrations began. With the establishment of legal contracts and land titles, traditional practices of "verbal tenancy rights" became less secure, allowing landowners to misinform peasants. He calls these peasants "hybrids" because they were displaced yet hoped to return to their hometowns after working. Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, 32. Through the *enko tokō* system (entry or recruitment through social connections), the first large wave of young Korean men headed to Japan in 1910. With the growing number of workers migrating to Japan, the colonial government sought to curb immigration by requiring applicants to be proficient in Japanese and have more than ten yen in addition to a travel fee and, by 1927, requiring migrants to produce an original copy of their census register and a signature from their district police precinct. Chin-sung Chung, "Colonial Migration from Korea to Japan" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1984), 135. *Maeil sinmun*, 8 April 1914. See also Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London: Routledge, 1994), 45, 112.

51. Most of the women *ch'ulga* headed to cities such as Keijō (Seoul) to work in textile factories, while their male counterparts sought work in mines and engaged in hard labor. Chōsen Shokusan Ginkō, *Shokugin chōsa geppō* 45 (Keijō, 1942), 20. Mun So-jŏng, "Ilcheha nongch'on kajok e kwanhan yŏn'gu" [A study of the rural village family under Japanese colonial rule], in *Han'guk sahoesa yŏn'guhoe nonmunjip* [A collection of articles by the Korean social history research association], vol. 12 (Seoul: Munhak kwa chisŏngsa, 1988), 96-98.

52. Of the 150,000 or so migrants, 69,644 farmers headed to Japan or Manchuria to find work. *Tonga ilbo*, 12 April 1927. Of those *inong* (farmers who were leaving permanently), 73.4 percent left for a place other than their hometowns to find work (i.e., at a factory, in commerce, or in other miscellaneous employment), 16.9 percent went to Japan, 2.1 percent to Manchuria, and 0.7 percent to Siberia. See Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen no shōsaku shūkan* [Tenancing practices of Koreans] (Keijō, 1929), 40-41.

53. A higher percentage of males migrated to faraway places like Manchuria

or Japan, whereas female migrants to cities outnumbered males by the 1920s. Kwŏn T'ae-hwan, "Ilche sidae ūi tosihwa" [Urbanization during the Japanese colonial period], in *Han'guk ūi saboe wa munhak* [Korean society and literature], vol. 11 (Seoul: Han'guk chŏngsin munhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1990), 270.

54. Chōsen Nōson Shakai Eisei Chōsakai, *Chōsen no nōson eisei* [Sanitation in Korean farming villages] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1940), 143–45. Many of those leaving the village were young; ages ranged from twelve to sixteen years. Even in 1935, the *Fusan shinpo* [Pusan daily] noted the impact of the "spring starvation" crisis and natural disasters on the rural family. Apart from the forty-six reported broken marriages in town, the police precincts reported more than 23,332 household members "leaving the home unannounced," and 2,069 leaving home as *dekasegi* (working away from home). *Fusan shinpo*, 3 March 1935.

55. Han In-t'aek, "Chōgūn yōgong" [Young factory girls], *Pip'an* (April 1932), cited in An Sūng-hyŏn, ed., *Han'guk nodong sosŏl chŏnjip* [Collection of Korean labor novels], vol. 2 (Seoul: Pogosa, 1995): 293–96.

56. Kim Un-gak, "Uri nongch'on ūi kaejo" [Reconstructing our rural villages], *Kaehyŏk* (April 1922), 98–101.

57. Yi Sōng-hwan, "Chosŏn ūi nongch'on yōsōng" [The rural women of Korea], *Chosŏn nongmin* (March 1927), 2.

58. In 1933, the *Tonga ilbo* noted that there were 266 waifs and 164 orphans wandering the streets of Seoul. *Tonga ilbo*, 6 April 1933.

59. Countless newspaper accounts reported that a growing number of farmers resorted to selling young girls to brothel masters and restaurant owners in the cities, as well as to customers in distant places like Manchuria. *Tonga ilbo*, 26 Nov. 1924. Ae Hyang-nyu, "Nongch'on ch'ōnyŏ p'allinūn imyŏn" [The inside story of selling a farm girl], *Sil saenghwal* (Oct. 1931), 29–31.

60. *Tonga ilbo*, 2 July 1925, 24 Nov. 1925. *Yu-gwak*, red-light districts, were established in Pusan (1902), Inch'ŏn (1902), Wŏnsan (1903), and Kyōngsōng (1904). Two red-light districts were set up in Kyōngsōng (Keijō), at Sinch'ōng (Shinmachi) and Sillimdong. The *Tōkanfu* (resident-general) sought to regulate prostitution by maintaining official "licensed" districts where *kongch'ang* (licensed prostitutes) could engage in their trade after paying a union fee. Although the ordinance on public prostitution promulgated in 1908 and revised in 1916 set the legal age at seventeen, many peasant girls, driven by poverty and unable to afford a license, engaged in illicit prostitution (i.e., working as a *chakpu* or barmaid). Yamashida Yōng-ae, "Singminji chibae wa kongch'ang chedo ūi chŏn'gae" [Colonial control and the development of the prostitution system], *Saboe*

wa yŏksa 51 (1997): 159–60. According to one reporter, a Japanese prostitute charged four times more than a Korean prostitute. *Tonga ilbo*, 15 Nov. 1920.

61. *Tonga ilbo*, 6 April 1922.

62. Angus Hamilton, *Korea* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 48, 121.

63. Pae Sōng-yōng, "Chibang ūi nongch'on p'ungsŭp" [Customs of farming villages in the countryside], *Nongmin* (June 1932), 55–57.

64. *Tonga ilbo*, 17 Sept. 1933. Another journalist, shocked to see so many women in the field, notes, "I have never seen so many female bodies!" *Tonga ilbo*, 25 June 1932. Ōno Tamotsu also noted that because of the absence of their husbands, wives would harvest the rice during *nong pŏn-gi* (farmers' busy season). Ōno Tamotsu, "Chōsen nōgyō no jittaiteki kenkyū" [A study of the actual conditions of agriculture in Korea], *Manshū gyōsei gakkai, ronsō dai 4 shu* (Keijō, 1941): 194–95.

65. Han Hūg-u, "Nongch'on puin ūn kodalp'ūda" [It is weary being a wife in a farming village], *Yōsōng* (Jan. 1940), 96.

66. Grajdanzev, *Modern Korea*, 152.

67. "Injogyŏn kwa nongch'ŏn" [The rural village and rayon], *Nongmin* (June 1930), 29.

68. *Tonga ilbo*, 10 Oct. 1932.

69. Pak Hwa-sōng, "Hankwi" [Drought], *Cho kwang* (Nov. 1935), cited in 1920–1930-yŏndae *minjung munhaksŏn* [Selection of minjung literature from 1920 to 1930], ed. Chu Chong and Yi Chōng-ūn, vol. 1 (Seoul: T'apch'ulp'ansa, 1990), 101–14.

70. Ōno Tamotsu, "Chōsen nōgyō no jittaiteki kenkyū" 347–48.

71. *Tonga ilbo*, 19 July 1933.

72. *Tonga ilbo*, 14 June 1935.

73. Yi Hye-suk, "Nongch'on ūi yōsōngdŭl" [Women in the rural villages], *Nongmin* (May 1930), 35.

74. Many young girls who were not able to enter the factories worked as maids or *ch'imo* (seamstresses). Kwŏn T'ae-hwan, "Ilche sidae ūi tosihwa," 27.

75. Thomas Dublin, *Transforming Women's Work: New England Lives in the Industrial Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

76. Tōkanfu, *Tōkanfu tōkei nenpō* [Annual statistical report of the residency-general of Korea] (Keijō, 1910). Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō* [Statistical yearbook of the Government-General of Korea] (Keijō, 1919–1940). It was only after 1922 that women workers were separately tabulated as a category in Government-General records.

77. Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō*, 1922, 1936; Takahashi, *Gen-dai chōsen keizai ron*, 430.
78. Keijō Shōkō Kaigisho, *Keijō ni okeru kōjō chōsa* [A survey of factories in Seoul] (Keijō, 1937), 115–16.
79. For a good example of the feminizing of industries, see Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).
80. Yi Chōng-ok, “Ilcheha kongōp nodong esō ūi minjok kwa sōng, 1910–1945” [Race and sex in industrial labor under Japanese colonial rule 1910–1945] (Ph.D. diss., Seoul National University, 1990), 275.
81. *Chosŏn sinmun*, 2 July 1930.
82. Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Kokusei chōsa hōkoku* [A study of the state of affairs of Korea: A report] (Keijō, 1935), cited in Sō, Hyōng-sil, “Singminji sidae yōsōng nodong undong e kwanhan yōngu: 1930-yōndae chōnban’gi komu chep’um chejo’ōp kwa chesa’ōp ūl chungsim ūro” [A study of the women’s labor movement under Japanese colonialism: Centering on the rubber and silk-reeling industry during the first half of the 1930s] (Ph.D. diss., Ewha Womans University, 1989), 36–38.
83. Chōsen Shōkō Kaigisho, *Chōsenjin shōkkō ni kan suru kōsatsu* [An inquiry into Korean commerce/industry] (Keijō, 1936), 27.
84. Ibid.
85. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 14 Feb. 1925.
86. “Yakchin hanūn chō chejo kong’ōp sahoe pangmun’gi,” 114.
87. “Sōmsōm oksuro tchanūn pangjik yōhakkyo” [Weaving with delicate hands: A woman’s textile school], *Samch’ŏlli* (Jan. 1936), 141.
88. *Sin tonga* (June 1932), 68.
89. Yi Sōng-hwan, “Puin kwa chigōp chōnsōn” [Women and the work front], *Sin yōsōng* (March 1932), 13.
90. Ibid.
91. The female workers at Sawada Silk Reeling Factory had to work for thirteen hours or more a day to earn twenty to thirty *chōn*. *Tonga ilbo*, 12 Dec. 1924.
92. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 12 Feb. 1925.
93. “Chitpalp’in chōngmi yōjikkong ūi sogim ōmnūn kobaek kwa hoso” [An honest confession and complaint by a trampled-down rice-polishing female factory worker], *Pyōlgŏn’gon* (June 1931), 28; *Tonga ilbo*, 1 Jan. 1925.
94. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 2 Feb. 1925.
95. Keijō Shōkō Kaigisho. *Keijō ni okeru kōjō chōsa*, 41–42.
96. See Chōsen Ginkō, *Chōsen kezai nenpō* [The annual economic report of Korea] (Seoul, 1948).

97. Pyōng Ch’ōl [pseud.], “Nodongja ka bon puin nodongja ūi saenghwal munje” [The problems of livelihood among married woman workers seen through the eyes of a male worker], *Pip’an* (March 1933), 64–65.
98. Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō*, 1929, 192–97.
99. Kwōn T’ae-hwan, “Ilche sidae ūi tosihwa,” 27.
100. “Sonyōn chikkong” [A juvenile factory worker], *Chosŏn chi kwang* (June 1922), 366–74.
101. The organization of time and control of time space was an important aspect of Fordist production. See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 125–29.
102. Chōng Un-bing, “Yangmal chigōp ūi chaeg’ūi” [Dispute at a socks company], *Samch’ŏlli* (May 1931), 352.
103. There were 440 rice mills among 1,352 factories. Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō*, 1919, n.p.
104. Chitpalp’in chōngmi yōjikkong ūi sogim ōmnūn kobaek kwa hoso,” 28
105. Ibid.
106. Keijōfu Sangyō Chōsakai, *Orimono kōgyō ni kansuru chōsa* [A survey of the weaving industry] (Keijō, 1937), 69.
107. Kawai Akitake. *Chōsen kōgyō no gen dankai* [The present stage of Korean industries] (Keijō: Tōyō keizai shinpōsha Keijō shikyoku, 1943), 273–75.
108. Textile industries included *meriyasu* (knit fabric), cotton spinning, weaving, twisted yarn, cloth, dyeing, and processed cotton. Of the 2,459 workers profiled, the shortest time a worker stayed was three months or less (17.3 percent) and the longest was four or more years (9.4 percent). Yuk Ji-su, “Seishi rōdō ni tsuite” [Regarding silk-reeling labor], *Chōsen Sōtokufu chōsa geppō* 9, no. 6 (Sept. 1938): 27–28; 34–35.
109. *Tonga ilbo*, 25 June 1927; In the case of England, based on an 1851 census, 27 percent of the female workers toiling in the seven Lancashire districts were married. Margaret Hewett, *Wives and Mothers in Victorian Industry* (London: Rockcliff, 1958), 14.
110. The workers declined from 32 percent in 1937 to 31.5 percent in 1940. Female workers shifted to munitions factories or chemical industries. See Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō*, 1937–44.
111. Hosoi Wakizō, *Jokō aishi* [The pitiful history of female factory workers] (Tokyo: Kaizōsha, 1925), 25–29. In the cotton industry, female workers were assigned to carding, drawing, roving, and spinning, while their male counterparts would work with the rollers or in the transportation sector.
112. One should note, however, that Toyota’s N-type (1920) looms or his

G-type (1927) automatic loom, though popular in Japan, were not necessary in Korean factories because of cheap labor. The looms in Korean factories were much inferior in speed and quality to those in Japan. Kojima Tsunehisa, *Hataraku josei byakunen no ayumi* [The course of one hundred years of working women] (Tokyo: Kawade Shōbōshinsā, 1983), 3.

113. Yuk Ji-su, "Seishi rōdō ni tsuite," 27–28.

114. Han In-t'aek, "Chōgūn yōgong" [Young factory girls], *Pip'an* (April 1932), cited in An Sūng-hyōn, ed., *Han'guk nodong sosŏl chŏnjip*, 293–96.

115. By the 1920s, Yi's Korean-style rubber shoes outsold *mit'uri* (hemp-cord sandals) and *namaksin* (wooden clogs worn during the rainy season). Yi, working as an errand boy at a Japanese sundry goods shop in P'yōngyang, had tried peddling Japanese rubber shoes without much success. Puzzled at the lack of interest from Korean consumers, Yi decided to sojourn in Japan and learn firsthand how to set up a rubber factory. By the early 1920s, entrepreneurs started advertising rubber shoes designed by Yi in the newspapers. Kim T'ae-su, *Kkot kach'i p'ŏ maehokk'e hara: sinmun kwanggoro bon kŭndae ūi p'unggyōng* [Bloom like a flower, make it enchanting: Looking at the modern landscape through the lens of newspaper advertisements] (Seoul: Hwangsojari, 2005), 34–35.

116. *Ibid.*, 36.

117. *Chosŏn nongmin* (Oct. 1929): 15–16.

118. "Kyōngsōng yōsōng yōjikkong t'onggye" [Statistics of female factory workers in Seoul], *Chosŏn chi kwang* 8 (May 1928): 51.

119. Workers often had dark bruises on their arms. Keijōfu, *Gomu kōgyō ni kansuru chōsa* [A study of the rubber industry] (Keijō, 1935), 63, 68.

120. In 1929 there were 2,104 nurseries in Korea. Sin Yōng-suk, "Ilcheha han'guk yōsōng sahoesa yōn'gu" [A social history of Korean women under Japanese colonial rule], (Ph.D. diss., Ewha Womans University, 1989), 146.

121. "Komin ūi kobaek: ōnū puin kija ūi ilgi" [An agonized confession: Diary of a certain married woman journalist], *Sin kajōng* (Feb. 1935), 33–36.

122. Yi Chōk-hyo, "Ch'ongdongwŏn" [General mobilization], *Pip'an* 3 (Aug. 1931), cited in An Sūng-hyōn, ed., *Han'guk nodong sosŏl chŏnjip*, 213–37. The reporter profiled a household where the husband took care of the infant while the wife worked at a rice mill. The husband had been laid off and could not find any work. The author notes: "The [father] feeds and holds the baby. . . . When would you have this kind of comfort [and] luxury?" Also see "Chitp'alp'in chōngmi yōjikkong ūi sogim ōmnūn kobaek kwa hoso," 28

123. *Tonga ilbo*, 28 July 1933.

124. *Chosŏn chung'ang ilbo*, 10 Sept. 1933.

125. Keijōfu, *Gomu kōgyō ni kansuru chōsa*, 63.

126. *Tonga ilbo*, 22 Jan. 1930.

127. *Tonga ilbo*, 4 July 1935.

128. Yuk Ji-su, "Seishi rōdō ni tsuite," 34–35.

129. *Tonga ilbo*, 1 Sept. 1932.

130. U Sun-ok, "Ōnū chesa yōgong ilgi" [A diary of some silk-weaving factory girl], *Pyōlgŏn'gon* (May 1930), 72–73.

131. Chigōp sonyōdŭl ūi kaji kaji solum" [Juvenile girl factory workers' various griefs], *Ōrini* (June 1929), 14

132. *Chosŏn chung'ang ilbo*, 9 April 1930. At the Tongyang Reeling factory, even when the workers went on strike, apprentices remained on the job, knowing that they would have to start their apprenticeships over again or be fired. *Chosŏn sinmun*, 8 Dec. 1930.

133. *Tonga ilbo*, 1 Sept. 1932.

134. "Chigōp sonyōdŭl ūi kaji kaji solum," 14.

135. "Kongjang sonyōn sunbanggi" [My account of my visit to a boys' factory], *Ōrini* (June 1929), 24.

136. *Tonga ilbo*, 3 Nov. 1926.

137. Chōsen Sōtokufu, *Chōsen Sōtokufu chōsa geppō* [Korean Government-General monthly investigation report] (May 1931), 111.

138. Minami Manshū Tetsudō Kabushiki Gaisha Keizai Chōsa Dai ichibu (Hen), *Chōsenjin rōdōsha ippan jijō* [The general review of Korean workers] (Keijō: Tairen, 1933), 71.

139. *Tonga ilbo*, 30 Nov. 1926

140. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 271.

4. DISCOURSING IN NUMBERS

1. *Chosŏn ilbo*, 16 May 1931, 28–31 May 1931, 12 June 1931. Muho Hyang-in [pseud.], "Ŭlmildae ūi ch'e kongnyō yōryu t'usa Kang Chu-ryong hoekyōn'gi" [An account of my meeting with Kang Chu-ryong, Ŭlmildae's female factory worker and champion], *Tonggwang* (July 1931), cited in Yōsōngsa yōn'gu moim kilbak sesang, *20-segi yōsōng sagōnsa* [Historical women's events during the twentieth century] (Seoul: Yōsōng sinmunsa, 2001), 99.

2. She rejected the idea of suicide because the public would interpret the act as a private atonement for her husband's death. When Ch'oe Chōn-bin (five years