Feminine Technologies, Women Users, and Female Bodies in South Korea, 1950–2000

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by Youngju LEE

First assessor: Prof. Dr. Mikael Hård

Second assessor: Dr. Aya Homei

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the active involvement of South Korean women with technologies related to three female bodily experiences: menstruation, contraception, and vaginal discharge, through the second half of the twentieth century. The technologies include not only intrauterine devices (IUDs), oral contraceptive pills, and tubal ligation, but also homemade fabric menstrual pads, disposable menstrual pads, tampons, spermicides, the rhythm method, douches, and so-called feminine washes.

To this end, the term "feminine technology" is used as a conceptual tool and the concept of "affordance of technology" as an analytic tool. Feminine technology refers to material artifacts and methods associated with women's biology. With this approach, the abovementioned mundane things and methods can be viewed as technology and ordinary women as users of technology. The materiality of individual female bodies differs from the ideal body imagined by product manufacturers and developers. Thus, users of feminine technologies must find the gap between their bodies and the body inscribed in a technology and adjust it accordingly, rather than simply buying and using it.

The concept of affordance of technology and its mechanisms are employed to capture the nuanced interactions between female users and feminine technologies. According to the concept of affordance of technology, a certain technology does not force its users but instead nudges them by *demanding* and *request*ing certain actions. A user who chooses a certain technology that *allows* specific actions can accept such demands or requests from technology but can also reject them and select alternatives. Given such options, although the range of actions is always constrained by the material and sociocultural context in which the user is situated, the concept of affordance can lead to a better understanding of the relationship between users and technologies beyond collective decision-makers of a certain technology.

Throughout the 1970s, as more girls became students and workers and their bodies moved beyond their homes, they chose manufactured disposable menstrual products instead of homemade menstrual pads. The new menstrual technology allowed them to handle their menstruation more conveniently. However, a preexisting idea that menstruation should be concealed shaped the pad as an artifact that requests a series of actions to conceal it from its users. At the same time, female users soon found out that they had to modify the portable and standardized menstrual products to suit their individual bodies. By the 1980s, most women, in particular female adolescents, considered *menstruation* a normal biological process and saw their *menstruating bodies* as vulnerable and even susceptible to stress and disease. In this shift, women adopted alternatives to deal with their menstruation against physicians' advice and manufacturers' expectations.

From the 1960s to the 1990s, through the national family planning program, the South Korean government promoted IUDs, oral contraceptive pills, and laparoscopic tubal ligation. Korean women who had already wanted to control their fertility willingly embraced these contraceptive technologies. IUDs and oral contraceptive pills allowed some women to conceal their contraception from their husbands and their parents-in-law, who sometimes opposed contraception. For couples who decided to have no more children, tubal ligation allowed safe, permanent contraception. However, the technologies brought changes, big or small, in users' bodies—in other words, side effects. Women users either accepted the side effects, stopped using contraceptives, or found alternatives. In the 1980s, as more husbands assumed responsibility for contraception, vasectomies and condoms were added to the list of alternative contraceptives, which allowed married couples to decide on a suitable contraceptive technology among a broader range of contraceptives beyond just those for women.

From the 1960 to the 1980s, vaginal products called "feminine washes," or "vaginal cleansers" appeared in South Korea. Their manufacturers selectively appropriated inconsistent medical discourses about the ideal vagina produced by experts and promoted these products as a technology that would allow women to treat illness, enhance sexual pleasures, or prevent disease, better than preexisting methods such as warm water used by women for vaginal cleansing. At the same time manufacturers appealed to women's bodily experiences with contraception, menstruation, and changes in the vaginal environment. The establishment of the feminine hygiene product market in the 1980s was the result of women's interpretation of medical discourse about the ideal vagina and their own bodily experiences in choosing these products. The fact that women readily abandoned these technologies when they considered them unsuitable for their bodies or returned to more fitting alternatives such as warm water, demonstrates that their choices were not simply uncritical adherence to advertising narratives.

The engagement of female users with feminine technologies shows how various technologies were interconnected and how users created a technological landscape in which several technologies co-existed. At the same time, the technological landscape, the shift in women's social position, and the idea of their menstruating, fertile, and discharging bodies were mutually shaped. In this sense, by involving feminine technologies in active and creative ways, female users—in other words, ordinary women—participated in the fabrication of South Korean society.

Feminine Technologien und weibliche Körper: Frauen als Techniknutzerinnen in Südkorea, 1950-2000

Zusammenfassung

Ziel dieser Dissertation ist es, die aktive Auseinandersetzung südkoreanischer Frauen mit Technologien im Zusammenhang mit drei weiblichen Körpererfahrungen (*bodily experiences*) - Menstruation, Empfängnisverhütung und Scheidenausfluss - in der zweiten Hälfte des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts zu untersuchen. Zu diesen Technologien gehören nicht nur Intrauterinpessare (IUDs), orale Verhütungspillen und Eileiterabschnürung, sondern auch selbst hergestellte Menstruationsbinden aus Stoff, Einwegmenstruationsbinden, Tampons, Spermizide, die Rhythmusmethode der Empfängnisverhütung, Intimspülungen und so genannte Damenwaschmittel.

Zu diesem Zweck wird der Begriff „feminine Technologie“ (*feminine technology*) als begriffliches Instrument und das Konzept der „Angebotscharakter von Technik“ (*affordance of technology*) als analytisches Instrument verwendet. Feminine Technologie bezieht sich auf materielle Artefakte und Methoden, die mit der Biologie der Frau in Verbindung stehen. Mithilfe dieses Ansatzes können die oben erwähnten alltäglichen Dinge und Methoden als Technik und gewöhnliche Frauen als Techniknutzerinnen betrachtet werden. Die Materialität eines individuellen weiblichen Körpers unterscheidet sich von dem idealen Körper, den sich die Produkthersteller und -entwickler vorstellen. Die Nutzerinnen femininer Technologien stellen daher immer wieder die Diskrepanz zwischen ihrem Körper und dem Körper, der einer Technologie anhaftet, fest und passen die Technologie entsprechend an, anstatt sie einfach zu kaufen und zu benutzen.

Das Konzept der „Angebotscharakter von Technik“ und ihrer Mechanismen wird verwendet, um die nuancierte Interaktion zwischen Nutzerinnen und femininen Technologien zu erfassen. Laut dieser *Affordance*-Theorie zwingt eine bestimmte Technologie ihre Nutzer*innen nicht, sondern gibt ihnen vielmehr den fordernden Anstoß zu bestimmten Handlungen. Ein(e) Benutzer*in, die eine bestimmte Technologie wählt, die bestimmte Handlungen ermöglicht, kann solche Forderungen der Technologie akzeptieren, sie aber gleichzeitig auch ablehnen und sich stattdessen Alternativen ausdenken. In Anbetracht solch unterschiedlicher Handlungen eines/r Nutzers/Nutzerin kann die *Affordance*-Theorie zu einem besseren Verständnis der Beziehung zwischen Nutzer*innen und Technologie jenseits kollektiver Entscheidungsträger*innen und hochentwickelter Technologien führen. Die

Bandbreite solcher Handlungen ist dabei immer durch den materiellen und soziokulturellen Kontext, in dem sich der/die Nutzer*in befindet, eingeschränkt.

Als in den 1970er Jahren immer mehr Mädchen studierten und arbeiteten und ihre Körper dadurch nicht mehr zu Hause verweilten, entschieden sie sich für Einwegmenstruationsbinden anstelle von selbstgemachten Binden. Die neue Menstruationstechnologie ermöglichte es ihnen, ihre Menstruation bequemer zu handhaben. Die dominierende Vorstellung, dass die Menstruation verborgen werden solle, machte die Binde zu einem Artefakt, das eine Reihe von Maßnahmen erforderte, um ihre Benutzerinnen sie verbergen zu können. Gleichzeitig realisierten die Nutzerinnen bald, dass sie die tragbaren und standardisierten Menstruationsprodukte modifizieren mussten, um sie an ihre individuell menstruierenden Körper anzupassen. In den 1980er Jahren betrachteten die meisten Frauen, insbesondere weibliche Jugendliche, die Menstruation als normalen biologischen Vorgang und sahen ihren menstruierenden Körper als verletzlich und sogar anfällig für Stress und Krankheiten an. Im Zuge dieses Wandels wählten Frauen entgegen den Empfehlungen der Ärzte und den Erwartungen der Hersteller Alternativen im Umgang mit ihrer Menstruation.

Von den 1960er bis in die 1990er Jahre förderte die südkoreanische Regierung im Rahmen des nationalen Familienplanungsprogramms die Spirale, die Antibabypille und die laparoskopische Eileiterabschnürung. Koreanische Frauen, die ihre Fruchtbarkeit bereits kontrollieren wollten, nahmen solche Verhütungsmittel bereitwillig als Technologie an, die eine für sie geeignete Verhütung ermöglichten. Die Spirale und die Antibabypille ermöglichten es einigen Frauen, ihre Verhütung vor ihren Ehemännern und manchmal auch vor ihren Schwiegereltern zu verbergen, die oftmals gegen solch eine Verhütung waren. Für Paare, die sich entschlossen hatten, keine weiteren Kinder bekommen zu wollen, ermöglichte die Eileiterabschnürung eine sichere und dauerhafte Verhütung. Die Technologien brachten jedoch auch große oder kleine Veränderungen der Körper der Nutzerinnen mit sich – die Rede ist hier von Nebenwirkungen. Frauen akzeptierten entweder die Nebenwirkungen, setzten die Verhütungsmittel ab oder suchten nach Alternativen. In den 1980er Jahren übernahmen immer mehr Ehemänner ihrerseits die Verantwortung für die Empfängnisverhütung, wodurch Vasektomien und Kondome neu in die Liste der alternativen Verhütungsmittel aufgenommen wurden. Dadurch hatten verheiratete Frauen nun die Möglichkeit, sich für eine geeignete Verhütungsmethode aus einer breiteren Bandbreite an Verhütungsmitteln zu entscheiden, die über weibliche Verhütungsmittel hinausging.

Von den 1960er bis zu den 1980er Jahren erkannten immer mehr koreanische Frauen ihren vaginalen Zustand und nutzten verschiedene Technologien, die ihnen versprachen, die ideale Vagina zu erreichen. Dieses Konzept der „idealen Vagina“ war insbesondere durch medizinische Diskurse über vaginale Ausscheidungen geprägt. Aber auch die Hersteller von Vaginalprodukten wie Spülungen und

Damenwaschmitteln sowie die eigenen Körpererfahrungen von Frauen im Zusammenhang mit ihrer Empfängnisverhütung, Menstruation und vaginalen Veränderungen trugen zur Idee einer idealen Vagina und zur Expansion des Marktes für Vaginaltechnologien bei. Mehrere Frauen, die Veränderungen an ihrem Körper erlebten, benutzten solche Produkte. Doch sobald sie feststellten, dass diese Technologien nicht für ihre Körper geeignet waren, sahen sie von einer weiteren Benutzung ab oder fanden Alternativen wie etwa warmes, sauberes Wasser zum Waschen ihres Geschlechtsteils.

Die Auseinandersetzung der Nutzerinnen mit femininen Technologien zeigt, wie verschiedene Techniken miteinander verbunden waren und wie Nutzerinnen eine technische Landschaft schufen, in der mehrere Technologien koexistierten. Gleichzeitig prägten sich die technologische Landschaft, die veränderte gesellschaftliche Stellung der Frau und die Vorstellung von ihrem menstruierenden, fruchtbaren und entleerenden Körper gegenseitig. In diesem Sinne beteiligten sich Frauen als aktive und kreative Nutzerinnen femininer Technologien an der Gestaltung der südkoreanischen Gesellschaft.

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1. Introduction

Menstruation, contraception, and vaginal discharge are universal biological events that almost all women experience, whether regularly or irregularly. However, the ways in which women experience these events vary according to individual conditions, including age, state of pregnancy, and general health, as well as the time and place in which women are situated. In South Korea, through the second half of the twentieth century, women experienced menstruation, contraception, and vaginal discharge in ways that differed significantly from the experiences of their grandmothers and mothers.

In the first half of the century, Korean women experienced less frequent or regular menstruation due to the prevalence of pregnancies and subsequent breastfeeding. They made menstrual pads out of fabric and reused them after washing. The majority of women did not engage in contraceptive practices. In the event of an unwanted pregnancy, some women resorted to self-induced abortions, ingesting abortifacient substances, jumping down from a high place, or by hitting their abdomen. Surgical abortions were uncommon. The majority of women did not express concerns about their vaginal secretions, resulting in a general lack of actions to eliminate them. However, by the 1980s, South Korean women's bodily experiences were affected by different devices, substances, and methods: disposable menstrual pads and tampons during menstruation; along with self-induced abortion, spermicides, condoms, rhythm methods, surgical abortion, intrauterine devices (IUDs), oral contraceptive pills, and tubal ligations for contraception; vinegar, boric acid, soap, douche, and so-called feminine washes for cleansing the vagina. Why did Korean women embrace such devices, substances, and methods? How did women's use of material artifacts and methods alter or reinforce their bodily experiences? What factors and individuals were involved in these shifts? How did these apparent shifts in the artifacts and practices affect South Korean society?

This dissertation traces how women and "feminine technology"—material artifacts and methods associated with the three female bodily experiences of menstruation, contraception, and vaginal discharge—were involved with each other in South Korea through the second half of the twentieth

century.[1] A focus on feminine technologies enables the recognition of women who chose, used, modified, and rejected these technologies. Furthermore, it permits an examination of women's corporeal bodies as they experienced a sociocultural milieu where disparate matrices—individual desires, family dynamics, discourses surrounding the female body, governmental policies, and global population control movements targeting fertile bodies—intersected. In conclusion, this dissertation argues that women's bodily experiences were shaped by a multitude of actors. These include women themselves, who used the technologies and considered which technology fit their bodies; entrepreneurs who produced and disseminated feminine technologies along with bodily knowledge; medical professionals, including physicians and pharmacists, who interacted with women; and state actors who implemented policies related to women's bodies, such as the national family planning program (hereafter FPP); and figures involved in the policies such as public health experts, bureaucrats, and field workers for the FPP. Furthermore, this dissertation argues that women's bodily experiences were inextricably intertwined with societal expectations of women and the ways in which women—who possess female bodies that menstruate, conceive, and discharge vaginal fluid—were expected to manage their bodies in South Korea.

A narrative that situates women at the center of the story of technologies associated with women's bodily experiences illuminates the active involvement of women in technology. In the history of technology, particularly in the context of medical technology, women have frequently been overlooked or described as passive consumers or victims of technology. However, in contrast to sophisticated bodily technologies in a hospital or laboratory setting, mundane feminine technologies, such as disposable menstrual pads and douches, always require manipulation by women. Furthermore, women were the arbiters of which technologies fit their bodies and could modify or reject those that did not. In addition, the question of which technology fits an individual's body was not solely determined by their bodily conditions but also by the sociocultural context in which they were situated. When a woman selected a specific feminine technology, she took into account various factors that constrained her technological choices, including financial or legal limitations, societal expectations and taboos pertaining to the technology in question and the bodily experiences it addresses. This indicates that women were more knowledgeable about the technologies than any other actors, including

[1] As I will explain, the term "feminine technology" is distinct from *FemTech*, which was coined by Ida Tin, the CEO of Clue, a menstrual tracking application, to refer to "a category of software, diagnostics, and Internet-connected products and services that focus on improving women's health" such as menstruation tracking application, or fertility solutions. Stephanie S Faubion, "Femtech and Midlife Women's Health: Good, Bad, or Ugly?" *Menopause*, 28.4 (2021), 347.

manufacturers or medical experts, albeit in different ways, even if they were not aware of the technical processes involved. Therefore, adopting a perspective that centers on women offers the advantage of capturing the sociocultural context in which women used feminine technologies in great detail and the fact that women were active and reflective users.

This dissertation aims to contribute to the history of technology users by revealing the ways in which women were actively engaged with the technologies associated with female bodily experiences. Concurrently, it aims to present an alternative narrative to the prevailing historical account of the body, which has primarily focused on its representation, by spotlighting women's bodily experiences. Furthermore, this dissertation endeavors to fill a significant gap in the history of technology in South Korea, which has hardly examined users and the relationship between technology and society, by investigating the gendered aspects underlying the use of technologies.

1.1. Women as Users of Feminine Technology

In the history of technology, attention has been predominantly focused on sophisticated technologies. Only recently, however, have women been examined as a significant group worthy of investigation. Historians of technology have studied the history of electricity, railway, automobile, and computer in great detail, with a particular focus on their development and transfer. Consequently, the primary actors in these narratives were male inventors, engineers, entrepreneurs, and technocrats involved in these processes. From this vantage point, or what David Edgerton terms an "innovation-centered" perspective, historians have inevitably neglected women, who have been largely excluded from the "world of inventor-entrepreneur" in most societies both educationally and socially.[2] Concurrently, this emphasis has perpetuated the notion that women are passive consumers or victims of man-made technology.[3]

Since the 1980s, some historians have challenged the hierarchical perspective in the history of technology, proposing an alternative view that positions women as users of technology. In the approaches that were strongly influenced by feminist studies, two distinct approaches could be discerned, though they were not mutually exclusive. The first approach entails a shift in focus from designers or developers to consumers. In this approach, female consumers are identified as a significant actor group in the acceptance or rejection of a given technology. This can result in consequences that differ from intentions and expectations of entrepreneurs or experts.

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[2] David Edgerton, *Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History since 1900* (Profile books, 2011), xi.

[3] Judy Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Penn State Press, 1991), 16.

In her seminal work, Ruth Cowan demonstrates the significance of consumer analysis, emphasizing the role of user-consumers, including women, in shaping technological choices through the history of technology. She puts forth the concept of the consumption junction, defined as "the place and the time at which the consumer makes choices between competing technologies." The concept of the consumption junction which situates users as a "departure" for analysis enables the identification of other pivotal domains in which consumers select specific technologies. Furthermore, it highlights how users have resulted in unanticipated consequences, thereby shaping technology in a determinative manner.[4] Building upon Cowan's proposal to consider the "broader context" in which users' decisions are made, Joy Parr examines the technological preferences of Canadian women in relation to two competing laundry technologies: wringer washers and automatic washing machines. She elucidates Canadian women's technological preferences in opposition to the assumptions of manufacturers and marketers. In doing so, she sheds light on how the women chose washers instead of new automatic washing machines, highlighting the influence of the "internal politics of households and perceptions of wellbeing and waste" on consumer decisions.[5]

Similarly, studies on the history of medical technology have demonstrated that women as consumers contributed to the acceptance of new technologies in society, despite the reluctance of medical experts and pharmaceutical companies. For example, studies on the medicalization of childbirth in the early twentieth century in the United States have revealed that women actively participated in the process by embracing certain technologies related to delivery. In *Lying-in*, Richard W. Wertz and Dorothy C. Wertz illustrate that American women, particularly those of a higher socioeconomic status, desired the adoption of medical technologies, even in the face of resistance from the medical profession. They urged American physicians to accept the "hospital-based techniques for painless birth," such as ether or chloroform, which had been developed in Germany, despite the reservations of some American doctors regarding their reliability and safety. Concurrently, the upper- and middle-class women gave birth to a smaller number of children. This resulted in a heightened awareness of the risk of fetal death during childbirth. Some physicians also mobilized these women's concerns, leading to a preference among women for delivery in hospitals, which were

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[4] Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "The Consumption Junction: A Proposal for Research Strategies in the Sociology of Technology," in *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, ed. by Wiebe E Bijker, Thomas P Hughes, and Trevor J Pinch (MIT Press, 1987), 261–80.

[5] Joy Parr, "What Makes Washday Less Blue? Gender, Nation, and Technology Choice in Postwar Canada," *Technology and Culture* 38.1 (1997): 153–86.

seen as a place where “doctors’ skill nested,” equipped with the artifacts to prevent death (e.g., forceps, scissors, lancets, x-ray equipment, transfusion equipment, anesthesia, drugs, sterilizing equipment.)[6]

A review of the historical literature on the oral contraceptive pill and its user-consumers reveals that female users played a pivotal role in the acceptance of this technology in society. This challenges the argument that the popularity of the oral contraceptive pill was derived from a “male conspiracy.”[7] For example, Andrea Tone highlights the endorsements of the oral contraceptive pill by women (and men), contrasting them with the skepticism about the pill among the medical community and pharmaceutical companies in the 1950s. By that time, physicians were reluctant to become involved in contraceptive issues per se, and pharmaceutical companies were skeptical about the pill despite its high efficiency. From the perspective of these companies, there was “no preexisting market for a birth control pill,” because the pill required perfectly healthy individuals to take it daily, which was an unconventional concept at the time. However, by the early 1960s, the advent of new medical measures, including antibiotics, corticosteroids, and the polio vaccine, led to a shift in perception, whereby illness “could now be controlled, prevented, and sometimes even cured with something as simple as a pill.” Furthermore, from the perspective of women who used condoms and diaphragms, which disrupted the “pre- and post-coital rituals,” the oral pill offered not only “unrivaled efficacy” but also the potential to eliminate the need for manual manipulations during intercourse. These factors contributed to the pill’s unprecedented success.[8]

Such studies underscore the role of women as consumers who make decisions not only on which technology fits individual households but also on whether to accept a specific technology that satisfies their desires within the context of their socioeconomic position. In this manner, women have been actively engaged with medical technologies, even those that have been criticized for oppressing them.[9] Nevertheless, this approach to consumers fails to capture the relationship between women and technology beyond the acceptance or rejection of new technologies, such as automatic washing machines, x-ray equipment, or oral pills. How can we analyze the nuanced relationship between women and technology in their everyday lives, beyond the consumption of technology?

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[6] Richard W Wertz and Dorothy C Wertz, *Lying-in: A History of Childbirth in America* (Yale University Press, 1989), 144, 150.

[7] Elizabeth Watkins, *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives 1950-1970* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

[8] Andrea Tone, “Medicalizing Reproduction: The Pill and Home Pregnancy Tests,” *Journal of Sex Research* 49.4 (2012): 319–27.

[9] For the critic which argues that reproductive technology has oppressed women, see Wajcman, “Reproductive Technology: Delivered into Men’s Hands” in *Feminism Confronts Technology*, 54–80.

The second approach to the relationship between women and technology, which calls into question the very term "technology," offers insight into how we might discuss women users rather than consumers of modern technology. As feminist STS scholar Judy Wajcman aptly observes, the concept of technology has been defined "in terms of male activities." Consequently, Wajcman proposes that, rather than focusing on conventional and masculine technologies, we should consider the technologies within women's spheres, such as devices and methods associated with collecting, storing, or processing food.[10]

Similarly, some historians have expanded the definition of technology to encompass a broader range of artifacts and practices that were previously excluded from this category. This permits an examination of women as users of technology. For example, Nina E. Lerman et al. define technology as "how things are commonly done or made" and "what things are done and made," with the objective of "encompass[ing] the full range of human experiences," including "from chopping with stone tools to cooking in the microwave oven." The alternative definition of technology provides a framework through which women in the past and present can be viewed as reflective users of myriad mundane things and devices that constitute their everyday lives.[11] Furthermore, as Francesca Bray notes, this revised definition of technology enables us to challenge Eurocentric assumptions about technology. In her book about the relationship between technology and gender in imperial China, she highlights the "Eurocentric teleology in the history of technology," which has resulted in a predominant focus on sophisticated technology and its development. Using an anthropological framework, she puts forth the proposition that "a network of objects, activities, knowledge and meaning" could be considered technology. In doing so, the term technology could embrace "skills in the manipulations of physical materials" and "ritual, magic, arts, and social techniques."[12]

In alignment with this approach, this dissertation employs the term 'feminine technology' to refer to material artifacts and methods associated with bodily experiences related to women's biology. This term offers a valuable means of capturing women as users of things that have largely been overlooked in the realm of technology, such as menstrual pads, tampons, and methods of cleansing the vagina.

[10] Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology,* 17.

[11] Nina E Lerman, Arwen Palmer Mohun, and Ruth Oldenziel, "Versatile Tools: Gender Analysis and the History of Technology," *Technology and Culture* 38.1 (1997): 1–8.

[12] Francesca Bray, *Technology, Gender and History in Imperial China: Great Transformations Reconsidered* (Routledge, 2013), 4–5.

Furthermore, it enables us to examine the characteristics of the relationship between women and technologies that impact women's individual and material bodies.

I borrow the term feminine technology from Judith A. McGaw. McGaw calls for reconceiving technology, proposing the term to invite mundane artifacts associated with "women's biology" and "their social role" in the realm of the history of technology. She exemplifies the artifacts "by virtue of women's biology" such as tampons, brassieres, and IUDs, and "by virtue of their [women's] social role," such as kitchen utensils and sewing needles, as feminine technology. She raises an important question regarding the relationship between women and the feminine technology associated with female bodies when she inquires, "How do you know it [the brassiere] fits?" In contrast to the assumption of standardized bodies or the intention to "suit the mechanical to the biological," as McGaw notes, corporeal bodies are not fixed entities. "Any given woman's two breasts are never exactly the same size and shape," and "change continuously—as she ages, as she gains or loses weight, as she goes through pregnancies, as she experiences her monthly hormonal cycles." The discrepancy between the standardized body assumed by manufacturers or medical experts and the fluid bodies of individual women leads to "inadequacies" in feminine technologies. Consequently, as McGaw argues, "women's knowledge plays a crucial role by compensating for the inadequacies of many of these technologies."[13]

Her argument evokes the distinctive characteristics of the relationship between women and technologies that operate on women's bodies. This relationship differs from that observed in interactions between women and other technologies used for alteration or maintenance of external substances and environments, such as cookers, utensils, and other sophisticated technologies. Users of feminine technologies associated with women's bodies—such as brassieres worn over the breasts, disposable menstrual pads for their menstrual blood, oral contraceptive pills for regulating hormonal cycles, or douche solutions for their vaginal discharges—are in a position to observe, feel, or sense how these technologies work on their fluid bodies and to determine whether the technology fits. Therefore, even in the absence of knowledge regarding the production of such technologies, women possess a comprehensive understanding of their own bodies, enabling them to identify the most suitable technology for their bodies and to modify existing technology to fit their bodies. Concurrently, as the studies on technological decisions indicate, women's decisions regarding which technology fits their bodies were made within sociocultural contexts. This dissertation seeks to elucidate how women

[13] Judith A McGaw, "Why Feminine Technologies Matter" in *Gender and Technology: A Reader*, ed. by Nina E Lerman, Ruth Oldenziel, and Arwen Palmer Mohun (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 13–36.

with material and fluid bodies as users selected which technology fits their bodies, used it, and modified the technology in a particular sociocultural context.

1.2. The Docile Female Body and Women's Bodily Experiences

An examination of women's active involvement with feminine technologies as users reveals a multitude of bodily experiences that challenge the prevailing representation of the docile body in the history of the body. Historians have devoted considerable attention to the body from diverse perspectives over several decades, making it challenging to delineate the landscape of the history of the body. However, two distinct approaches to the vast historiography of the body can be discerned contingent on the specific body (or bodies) under scrutiny.

The first approach, which has been mainly influenced by Foucault's series of works since the 1980s, emphasizes the body as a social or cultural construct in and through which power or values are exercised, inscribed, framed, and manifested, or "discursively shaped and socially disciplined."[14] *The Making of the Modern Body*, edited by Thomas Laqueur and Catherine Gallagher, heralded the advent of such approaches within historical scholarship. The works in the edited volume historicize the body "as an entity that itself had a history."[15] As Lois McNay notes, the approach to the social body or Foucauldian body has furnished feminists who opposed biological determinism with a means of "conceiving the body as a concrete phenomenon without eliding its materiality with a fixed biological or prediscursive essence."[16]

Londa Schiebinger's work on illustrations of female skeletons in eighteenth-century Europe in *The Making of the Modern Body* represents such a pioneering approach to the discursive shaping of the female body. In the eighteenth century, as natural law buttressed the argument for equal political rights for all humans, liberal theorists sought to perpetuate women's subordinate positions, which differed from those of European white men, through the use of natural evidence. In the course of this process, Schiebinger argues, the anatomic or scientific representations of male and female skeletons were constructed as natural evidence for different roles in society, thereby supporting the patriarchal

[14] Iris Clever and Willemijn Ruberg, "Beyond Cultural History? The Material Turn, Praxiography, and Body History," *Humanities* 3.4 (2014): 546–66.

[15] Roger Cooter, "The Turn of the Body: History and the Politics of the Corporeal," *Arbor* 186.743 (2010): 393–405.

[16] Lois McNay, "The Foucauldian Body and the Exclusion of Experience," *Hypatia* 6.3 (1991): 125–39.

argument.[17] This deconstruction of medical discourse on the body has illuminated the body as a historically contingent entity, rather than an unproblematic and stable entity. However, as Roger Cooter notes, the first approach, or "representationalism," has overlooked bodies that have lived and experienced in a fleshly manner.[18]

The latter historical approach to the body focuses on vanished bodies as "site[s] of experience."[19] *The Women beneath the Skin* by Barbara Duden exemplifies such approaches. In her analysis, Duden draws upon the medical records of Johannes Pelargius Storch who treated patients in the German town of Eisenach circa 1730. Instead of employing "rigid, classical, foreign Latin," Dr. Storch documented "how the sick complain, how they describe what it is they feel" in their own vernacular. In considering the records as "authentic women's complaints, though undoubtedly distorted and condensed by the doctor," she seeks to capture the experiences of their bodies as perceived by his patients.[20] By concentrating on the women's bodily experiences as women expressed them, Duden illustrates the heterogeneous experiences of women and their interpretation of what happened to their bodies.

An examination of women's bodily experiences reveals the limitations of the first approach, which prioritizes the representations of and discourses surrounding the body. The studies that adopt the first approach, even if they do not reduce individual women to the docile body as Foucault did, tend to portray the female body as a homogeneous manifestation of power relations within a society. As a result, historians have inadvertently neglected women who did not comply with expectations set forth by such discourses and representations, thereby reinforcing an image of women as "passive bodies." In this sense, McNay calls for the recovery and revaluation of women's experiences.[21] Similarly, Caroline Bynum argues for the preservation of "the body dissolved into language" and the recognition

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[17] Londa Schiebinger, "Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteenth-Century Anatomy," in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Walter Laqueur (University of California Press, 1987), 42–82.

[18] Cooter, *"The Turn of the Body,"* 397.

[19] Kathleen Canning, "The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History," *Gender & History* 11.3 (1999): 499–513.

[20] Barbara Duden, *The Woman beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany*, trans. by Thomas Dunlap (Harvard University Press, 1991), 64, 85.

[21] McNay,"The Foucauldian Body," 125.

of the corporeal body "that eats, that works, that dies, that is afraid" and in which and for which desire is "lodged."[22]

However, these feminist calls for a focus on corporeal bodies and bodily experiences have seldom been embraced by historians. As Clever and Ruberg observe, approaches to "historical corporeal understanding" are scarce and "nearly always [written by] medical historians." This is partly due to the concern that an emphasis on the corporeal body could result in biological essentialism or biological determinism. This is unsurprising, as Schiebinger demonstrates, because biological differences between men and women have been exploited to perpetuate preexisting hierarchies. As Clever and Ruberg imply, the paucity of literature on bodily experiences is also attributed to the dearth of materials capturing such experiences.[23] Beyond cases, letters, and diaries in which individuals articulated and recorded their experiences, where can we find materials that include concrete records of bodies, through which people felt and experienced in their own words?

This dissertation argues that focusing on women's engagement with technology offers a balanced perspective on the historiography of the body. Indeed, the majority of studies on bodily technology have hitherto concentrated on the processes by which such technologies have alienated people, particularly women, from their own bodily experiences. These studies underscore the manner in which the body became manipulable and differences among individual bodily experiences were erased.[24]

For example, studies on the hormonal oral contraceptive pill and IUDs have demonstrated how the developers of these contraceptive technologies created a biologically universal body and simultaneously erased differences among women. In her book *Beyond the Natural Body,* Nelly Oudshoorn illustrates how statistics on menstrual cycles represented the diverse experiences of individual women who participated in trials of the oral contraceptive pill. Gregory Pincus, one of the developers of the pill, performed trials of the long-term use of the new contraceptive on women in Puerto Rico in collaboration with Edris Rice-Wray, a physician affiliated with the Puerto Rican Family Planning Association. Due to the results not meeting the initial expectations for FDA approval, Pincus replaced "the women participating in the trials" with statistical data. The mathematical representation

[22] Caroline Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 22.1 (1995): 1–33; Clever and Ruberg, "Beyond Cultural History?".

[23] Clever and Ruberg, *"Beyond Cultural History?"* 549.

[24] Donna J Drucker's' recent study on physician and birth control advocate Hannah Stone and her research on diaphragm and spermicides is an interesting exception in that the physician emphasized "the range of women's body types" and tried to find technologies "for every body [*sic*]." Donna J Drucker, "The Diaphragm in the City: Contraceptive Research at the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau, 1925–1939," *Icon* 26.2 (2021): 11–32.

of menstrual cycles erased the differences between the experiences of individual women who continued the trials and those who dropped out for some reason, as well as women in different sociocultural contexts.[25]

Similarly, Chieko Takeshita describes the paradoxical efforts of the developers of the IUD in the 1960s to universalize “women as biologically similar beings.” In considering the body as a machine that responds to the device, the developers sought to quantify and standardize the various women’s bodies. To ascertain the optimal dimensions and configuration of IUDs capable of preventing expulsion from the uterus, the developers attempted to establish a standardized and normalized representation of the uterus by using X-ray cartography. The developers presumed that women in developing countries, whose populations were considered by experts as needing regulation to avert a global population surge, were uninformed and lacked the motivation for contraception. Nevertheless, during the trials to develop the technology and secure its approval, “they chose women in the United States for the trials and generalized the test results to all women.”[26]

Such studies have explored the development of bodily technology, whereby technology is used to extract a universal and standardized body from the diverse women’s bodies which intersect across classes, races, and places. In the narratives, individual women are only revealed when they resist the universalization by the technology developers or medical experts associated with the technology, either by dropping out of the trials or by reporting serious side effects, which are often documented in numerical form.

A shift in focus from sophisticated technologies in hospitals to mundane feminine technologies in closets, shelves, and cabinets at home or in bags allows us to gain insight into how women were actively engaged with technologies in shaping their bodily experiences in everyday life. In interviews, oral histories, readers’ letters, and essays in women’s and female students’ magazines and newspapers, women complained about disposable menstrual pads that did not absorb their menstrual blood well and shared how they modified them to fit their bodies; asked whether tampons fit their bodies or not; talked about how their bodies responded to oral contraceptive pills and IUDs; and discussed which conditions made them choose feminine washes or stop using them. Concurrently, these experiences were linked to the discursive body or the societal expectations associated with the female body in society. As German medical historian Michael Stolberg notes, “corporality and body

[25] Nelly Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archaeology of Sex Hormones* (Routledge, 2003), 127–131.

[26] Chieko Takeshita, *The Global Biopolitics of the IUD: How Science Constructs Contraceptive Users and Women’s Bodies* (MIT Press, 2012), 53–7, 63–4.

experiences are fundamentally tied to a cultural and historical context."[27] Indeed, Korean women's considerations about which technology fits their bodies imply that women's bodily experiences are intersected by matrices of sociocultural expectations for women, dynamics between heterosexual couples, and economic conditions. In this sense, examining women's bodily experiences associated with feminine technologies allows us to capture women who are actively involved with technologies by interpreting biological phenomena in their bodies as well as the sociocultural contexts surrounding them.

1.3. Women in the History of Technology in South Korea

The role of women as users of technology in South Korea has not been the subject of extensive examination. One of the reasons for this is related to the predominant innovation-centered perspective, which has excluded women from the history of technology. Similar to their peers in Europe and the United States, historians of technology in South Korea have tended to prioritize the examination of sophisticated technologies. In addition to conventional topics in the history of technology in the West, they have focused on industrial technologies including electronics, automobiles, semiconductors, and steel technology, and their transfer from the West or Japan and domestic development.[28] As Hyungsub Choi notes, these focuses on industrial technologies have been derived from the perspective that regards technology as a crucial driver of economic development. This has resulted in a historiography of technology in South Korea heavily biased toward innovative technologies, and the transfer and development of such technologies led by scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, politicians and technocrats.[29] Consequently, there has been a notable absence of studies examining the nexus between technology and society beyond the confines of laboratories, factories, and the offices of politicians and technocrats.

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[27] Michael Stolberg, *Experiencing Illness and the Sick Body in Early Modern Europe* (Springer, 2011), 9.

[28] For studies on the transfer and development of industrial technologies in South Korea, to name a few, Song Sungsu 송성수, "Han'gugŭi kisulbaljŏn kwajŏnge nat'anan t'ŭkching punsŏk: p'osŭk'owa samsŏng pandoch'erŭl chungsimŭro 한국의 기술발전 과정에 나타난 특징 분석: 포스코와 삼성 반도체를 중심으로 (An Analysis on the Characteristics of Technological Development in Korea: Focusing on POSCO and Semiconductor in Samsung)," *Han'gukkwahaksahakhoeji* 34.1 (2012): 109–39; Sangwoon Yoo, "Innovation in Practice: The 'Technology Drive Policy' and the 4Mb DRAM R&D Consortium in South Korea in the 1980s and 1990s," Technology and Culture 61.2 (2020): 385–415.

[29] Choi Hyungsub 최형섭, "Kisulssawa kisulbip'yŏng saiesŏ: han'guk kisulssa yŏn'guŭi hŭrŭmgwa chŏnmang 기술사와 기술비평 사이에서: 한국 기술사 연구의 흐름과 전망 (Between History of Technology and Technology Critique: The Trend and Outlook of History of Technology in South Korea)," *Han'gukkwahaksahakhoeji* 42.3 (2020): 715–29.

A recent development in the historiography of technology in South Korea has been the emergence of a new approach, which, although not radical, has represented a significant shift in perspective.[30] In the 2010s, some scholars began to produce accounts of technology that extended beyond the traditional perspective of technology as a key to economic development. Instead, they focus on local contexts in South Korea.[31] For instance, Hyungsub Choi examines the manner in which the power tiller became integrated into the South Korean landscape and the ways in which its significance was transformed, with a particular emphasis on shifts in the economic and political milieu that initially constrained but subsequently facilitated the spread of the machine. The power tiller was originally invented as a garden tractor in Europe and the United States. In South Korea, while it had been intended to be utilized as a means of agricultural mechanization in South Korea, it subsequently became a common feature of the Korean landscape, utilized not only in agricultural settings but also on roads outside of fields.[32]

Despite the shifts in subjects and foci, they aligned with the studies on so-called innovative technology in that they concentrate on the development and transfer of technology and the figures involved in the process, such as politicians, engineers, entrepreneurs, and technocrats, neglecting the use of technology and users, including women. Similarly, historians of medicine in South Korea, another group with an interest in technology, continue to focus on the "suppliers of medicine," such as the state and physicians, rather than on consumers and patients, who could be users of technology.[33]

A further reason for the exclusion of women from the history of technology in South Korea is related to the lack of interest in the relationship between technology and women, or more broadly

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[30] Hyungsub Choi, "The Social Construction of Imported Technologies: Reflections on the Social History of Technology in Modern Korea," *Technology and Culture* 58.4 (2017): 905–20.

[31] Kim Tae-ho 김태호, "Kajang kwahakchŏgin munja'wa kŭndae kisurŭi ch'ungdol: ch'ogi kigyesik han'gŭlt'ajagi kaebal kwajŏngŭi munjedŭl 가장 과학적인 문자와 근대 기술의 충돌: 초기 기계식 한글타자기 개발 과정의 문제들, 1914–1968 (The Conflict between 'the Most Scientific Character System' and Modern Technology: Issues in the Early History of Korean Mechanical Typewriters, 1914-1968)," *Han'gukkwahaksahakhoeji* 33.3 (2011): 1–42; *Kŭnhyŏndae han'guk ssarŭi sahoesa 근현대 한국 쌀의 사회사 (A Social History of Rice in Modern Korea)* (Paju: Tŭllyŏk, 2017); Dongoh Park, "The Korean Character Code: A National Controversy, 1987-1995," *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 38.2 (2016): 40–53.

[32] Hyungsub Choi, "Imported Machines in the Garden: The Kyŏngun'gi (Power Tiller) and Agricultural Mechanization in South Korea," *History and Technology* 33.4 (2017): 345–66.

[33] Park Yun-jae 박윤재, "Han'guk kŭndae ŭihaksa yŏn'guŭi sŏnggwawa chŏnmang 한국 근대 의학사 연구의 성과와 전망 (The Trend and Prospect of Studies in the Modern History of Medicine in Korea)," *Ŭisahak* 19.1 (2010): 45–68.

gender. Indeed, the relationship has already been the subject of historical analysis in Western academia since the 1980s. In the 1980s, some feminist scholars initiated an examination of the impact of technology on women in terms of liberation and oppression. From the dichotomic viewpoint, they inquired whether technology, such as word processors and oral contraceptive pills, emancipated women from the existing patriarchal system, or, conversely, perpetuated it.[34] However, since the late 1990s, a perspective that regards technology as a "construction situated firmly in cultural context" has shed light on the mutual shaping of technology and gender.[35]

For example, in her study of Phillips' electric shavers for men and women, Ellen Van Oost illustrates how gendered expectations shaped the design of electric shavers for women, which were named Ladyshave, as a distinct product from the company's shavers for men, Philishave. In assuming technological proficiency in men, the company developed Philishave as a more masculine technology. By incorporating elements that were traditionally associated with masculinity, such as black and metallic materials, visible screws, and an adjustable head, the company allowed users to exert greater control over the device. Conversely, Ladyshave was designed with the assumption of women's technophobia. As a result, it was created as a cosmetic device, with a curved shape and a pastel color scheme that concealed its mechanical nature. Ladyshave users were permitted to attach only accessories included in a "beauty set" to the pink device. Consequently, Van Oost argues that the gender inscription of the two shavers resulted in users' disparate experiences with the material devices, and at a symbolic level, reinforced the representation of gender stereotypes that men are technologically competent while women are technophobic.[36]

In her book *Technology and Gender,* Francesca Bray demonstrates how gender and technology were mutually shaped at the societal level. In the book, she explores the co-construction of technologies, including house, textile, and reproductive technology, and women's roles and their experiences. She argues that meritocrats sought to perpetuate a gendered social order, symbolized by the adage "men till, women weave," which designated women as textile producers in the domestic sphere. Within the taxation system, as every household was obliged to pay their taxes using not only grain but also cloth and yarn, women were also considered taxpayers by the state. Consequently, through the practice of weaving, women fabricated material goods as well as social order, thereby

[34] Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology,* 123.

[35] Lerman, Mohun, and Oldenziel, *Gender and Technology*, 3.

[36] Ellen van Oost, "Materialized Gender: How Shavers Configure the Users' Feminity and Masculinity," in *How Users Matter: The Co-Construction of Users and Technology*, ed. by Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch (MIT Press, 2003), 193–208.

reinforcing and perpetuating the gendered ideology. However, the commercialization of textiles led to a shift in the meaning of the textile, reorganizing women's technological practices. Instead of weaving, Chinese women assumed the role of reproduction, giving birth or raising children through reproductive technologies such as abortifacients for maternal health and concubinage. This contributed to the maintenance of the gendered social order.[37]

As demonstrated by these studies on the relationship between technology and women or gender, the interactions between technology and women are not a straightforward reflection of society. Rather, it was a process of mutual shaping of technology, gender, and society, and a process in which women have participated. Consequently, an investigation into the nexus between technology and women enables us to comprehend the manner in which technology has influenced society from the perspective of ordinary women who were engaged in such technologies as significant actors. Recently, a small number of scholars have begun to examine the relationship between technology and women as consumers of goods and as telephone operators in colonial Korea.[38] Another remarkable contribution to the field is *Science and Technology and Women in Korea*, which offers a comprehensive examination of women's technological engagement in the Chosŏn Dynasty and the early twentieth century. In their book, Younghee Kim *et al*. adopt the previously mentioned approach of reconsidering the term technology and define it as "a series of practices that transform material objects in a systemic and purposive way." In doing so, they encompass "anonymous women" who practiced technology as well as typical practitioners into the realm of technology.[39] Despite this notable shift, such interactions between technology and women have been largely overlooked in the history of technology in South Korea after the liberation in 1945.

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[37] Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Univ of California Press, 1997).

[38] Yoon Sangkil 윤상길, "Ilchegangjŏmgi chŏnhwagyohwanshisŭt'em kusŏnggwa kyohwannodongŭi p'yojunhwa min sŏngbyŏrhwa 일제강점기 전화교환시스템 구성과 교환노동의 표준화 및 성별화 (The Standardization and Feminization of Switchboard-Operating Labor in Colonial Korea)," *Ŏŏllon'gwa sahoe* 19.2 (2011): 110–51; Kwon Chang-gyu 권창규, *Sangp'umŭi sidae: ch'ulsse, kyoyang, kŏn'gang, seksŭ, aeguk tasŏt kaji k'iwŏdŭro pon han'guk sobi sahoeŭi kiwŏn 상품의 시대: 출세, 교양, 건강, 섹스, 애국 다섯 가지 키워드로 본 한국 소비 사회의 기원 (The Era of Goods : The Origin of Consumer Society in Korea through Five Keywords of Success, Culture, Health, Sex, and Patriotism)* (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 2014); Park jin-kyung 박진경, "Chilbyŏngŭi kŭndae: iljegangjŏmgi puinbyŏngŭi ŭimiwa maeyakkwanggo 질병의 근대: 일제강점기 부인병의 의미와 매약광고 (Modernity of Disease: Exploring Meanings of Women's Disease and Patent Medical Advertisement in Colonial Korea)," *Asiayŏsŏngyŏn'gu* 60.3 (2021): 45–93.

[39] Kim Young-hee 김영희, Kim Su-jin 김수진, Yi Ggond-me 이꽃메, Ha Jung-ok 하정옥, and Lee Soon-gu 이순구, *Han'gugŭi kwahakkisulgwa yŏsŏng 한국의 과학기술과 여성 (Science and Technology and Women in Korea)* (Paju: Tŭllyŏk, 2020).

In the absence of women in the history of technology in South Korea in the latter half of the twentieth century, the association of women with reproductive technology has, exceptionally, been subjected to particularly rigorous examination. The majority of these studies conducted by feminist scholars employ the approach that posits technology as a tool of oppression of women in a patriarchal society. Aligned with the Western peers' dichotomous view of technology as either a means of liberation or oppression, they assert that individual women were unaware of the side effects or oppressive aspects. In the narratives, women were depicted as ignorant and their bodies were exploited by the state and other powerful actors.[40]

For example, in her article examining the continuity between laparoscopic tubal ligation, IVF, and stem cell research, Jung-ok Ha juxtaposes the role of the state and physicians against women. The state introduced and supported laparoscopic tubal ligation as a means of reducing population growth for economic development under the FPP. Medical professionals collaborated for the purpose of advancing scientific and commercial achievement, thereby exposing women to a "potentially risky new technology."[41] This perspective is not exclusive to feminist scholars' approach. In his dissertation, medical historian Seungmann Park employs the feminist scholars' approach which contrasts the powerful actors pursuing their interests through reproductive technology with the passive women who suffer from the side effects of the technology. Park notes that the male physicians involved in the FPP were able to secure overseas training opportunities for the latest medical technologies, as well as financial and research resources in tandem with the Korean government and international organizations. In contrast, women were portrayed as victims of the adverse, severe side effects of the

[40] Lee Mi-kyung 이미경, "Kukkaŭi ch'ulssanjŏngch'aek 국가의 출산정책 (A Feminist Analysis of the State Policy on Birth Control)," *Yŏsŏnghangnonjip* 6 (1989): 49–78; So Hyunsoog 소현숙, "Nŏmu manhi naha ch'angp'ihamnida: kajokkyehoek 너무 많이 낳아 창피합니다: 가족계획 (A Shame to Give Birth to Too Many Children: Family Planning)", in *20segi Yŏsŏngsagŏnsa 20 세기 여성사건사 (The Events in History of Women in the Twentieth Century)* (Sŏhaemunjip, 2001), 173–85; Jeong Yeonbo 정연보, "Saengmyŏnggyŏngjewa chaesaengsanr kajokkyehoeng saŏbŭi shirhŏmjŏng sŏnggyŏkkwa yŏn'gujawŏnŭrosŏŭi mom 생명경제와 재생산: 가족계획 사업의 실험적 성격과 연구자원으로서의 몸 (Bioeconomy and Reproduction: The Experimentality of Birt Control Project and Bodies as Resources for Research)," *Kkwahakkisurhagyŏn'gu* 20.3 (2020): 31–64.

[41] Ha Jung-Ok 하정옥, "Paekkopsusulbut'ŏ chulgisep'okkaji: paljŏnjuŭi sŏnggwae karyŏjin yŏsŏngŭi momgwa kongdongch'eŭi mirae 배꼽수술부터 줄기세포까지: 발전주의 성과에 가려진 여성의 몸과 공동체의 미래 (The History of Reproductive Technologies in Korea: Developmentalism Versus Women's Bodies and Community's Future)," *Chendŏwa munhwa* 5.2 (2012): 37–77.

latest contraceptive technologies by the physicians and government, who regarded women as nothing more than subjects and targets for the national program and research.[42]

I do not deny that women have experienced significant adverse effects associated with Lippes Loops or laparoscopic tubal ligation. Nor do I dispute the fact that the government and physicians introduced, tested, and distributed such medical contraceptives without adequately considering the potential health risks involved. Nevertheless, I argue that such histories of reproductive technology merely illustrate one aspect of the relationship between women and technology. By failing to consider the engagement of technology and women within a broader sociocultural context, such narratives tend to portray women as victims and passive recipients only. As Elizabeth Watkins notes, this approach serves "to perpetuate the very kinds of assumptions about women that feminists have been trying to challenge."[43]

In this regard, in her book *Human Reproduction in Modern Korea,* feminist sociologist Eun-kyung Bae presents an alternative perspective on the relationship between contraceptive technology and women. By focusing on women and their desires, she portrays women who willingly accepted modern, unfamiliar contraceptives rather than ignorant victims who were compelled to use the technology.[44] However, as she articulates, women's embrace of technology was related to the responsibility that women, as "daughters-in-law," should assume in maintaining the family lineage in a patriarchal society through the birth of sons. Furthermore, this was connected to the emerging role of the "modern mother," who was expected to bear a proper number of children and "raise them well." In this sociocultural context, the significance of contraceptive technologies evolved from a mere means of preventing unintended pregnancies to "effective" technologies that enable women to fulfill the role of modern mothers.[45]

Bae's approach, which regards women as active accepters of technology rather than as victims of technocratic intervention on their bodies, aligns with this dissertation in underscoring women's active engagement with technology. Furthermore, it recognizes the sociocultural context in which women's technological decisions were made. However, Bae's analysis does not recognize the existence of

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[42] Park Seungmann 박승만, "Pokkanggyŏngŭi kisulssa: 1970-80nyŏndae han'gugŭi pokkanggyŏng kisul toipkwa pogŭp, yŏnghyang 복강경의 기술사: 1970-80 년대 한국의 복강경 기술 도입과 보급, 영향 (Technological History of Laparoscopy: Transfer, Spread, and Influence of Laparoscopy in 1970-80s South Korea)" (doctoral thesis, Yonsei University, 2021).

[43] Watkins*, On the Pill*, 6.

[44] Bae Eun-kyung 배은경, *Hyŏndae han'gugŭi in'gan chaesaengsan 현대 한국의 인간 재생산 (Human Reproduction in Modern Korea)* (Seoul: Siganyŏhaeng, 2012).

[45] Bae Eun-kyung, *Human Reproduction in Modern Korea,* 84, 144.

women who selected less effective contraceptive methods, such as the rhythm method, condoms, and douches, while the government-sponsored family planning program provided medical contraceptives that experts had guaranteed to be highly effective at a significantly reduced cost. Additionally, she neglected to consider that when women selected the very technology, which the state deemed the most cost-effective from a national economic perspective, their motivations did not always align with the state's intentions. In this sense, Bae's approach oversimplifies the multifaceted ways in which women engaged with contraceptive technologies.

This dissertation goes beyond the examination of effective technologies provided by the state to investigate how women engaged with a broader range of feminine technologies in the process of choosing which technologies fit their bodies and modifying such technologies. This approach challenges the conventional view of women as victims or passive recipients of technology, instead positioning them as active users of technology. By doing so, the dissertation seeks to address a significant gap in the history of technology in South Korea. While previous research has focused on the development and transfer of sophisticated technologies, this dissertation aims to investigate the relationship between technology, gender, and society, including the experiences of women as users.

1.4. The Affordance of Technology as a Lens

In order to examine the women users' technological choices and methods for making a specific technology fit their bodies, this dissertation, following the proposal put forth by sociologist Jenny Davis, applies the concept of affordance to technology and its mechanisms. Since the 1980s, scholars whose research focuses on users of technology have proposed various conceptual tools for the analysis of users. These include relevant social groups and interpretative flexibility in the Social Construction of Technology approach (hereafter SCOT) and configuration of users and script in semiotic approaches.[46] Notwithstanding their interest in users, such analytical tools continue to prioritize designers and developers in companies or institutions due to the aforementioned innovation-centered perspective. In such approaches, the role of users is only discernible when they engage with designers or developers or participate in the developmental process of a technology. This limitation raises a series of questions: Are such concepts valid for investigating how women choose which technology fits their bodies, how they modify certain technologies, and how such technological

[46] For the approaches to users of technology and concepts that I mentioned, see Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch, "Introduction," in *How Users Matter: The Co-Construction of Users and Technologies*, ed. by Nelly Oudshoorn and Trevor Pinch, 1–25.

choices shape their everyday bodily experiences? Are they suitable for examining users in the relationship between users and technology, not as subordinate actors to developers or designers in a network of technological development?

The concept of affordance can be a useful tool for elucidating the nuanced relationship between women users and the feminine technologies that they choose, use, modify, or reject in their daily lives. The term affordance was first introduced by ecological psychologist James J. Gibson to describe the relationship between organisms and the environment. It was subsequently applied by cognitive psychologist Donald Norman to analyze the relationship between people and objects. In defining affordance, Norman states that it is “the perceived and actual properties of things, primarily those fundamental properties that determine just how the thing could possibly be used.” Just as a pair of scissors with two holes supports the insertion of fingers into the holes, a doorknob enables its users to twist to open the door. In essence, affordance refers to the properties of things that afford users to perform a specific action. Such properties prompt users to act in accordance with the designers’ intention, even in the absence of written instructions or illustrations for their operation.[47] While Norman developed affordance as a concept for designers, sociologists have embraced it as a means of studying the impact of new technology. By considering how technology affords its user, it is possible to circumvent technological determinism and instead focus on capturing the dynamics in “nuanced relationships between technological features and their effect on human subjects.”[48]

Among such sociologists, Jenny Davis operationalizes the concept of affordance through the mechanisms of affordance by demonstrating how technologies “request, demand, encourage, discourage, refuse, and allow.” She articulates that the affordance of technology contrasts with the idea that technology forces universal actions in any circumstance and on anyone. The affordance of technology as an analytic tool necessitates the acknowledgement of not only the “creative subversive human acts” of users but also the sociocultural and material constraints that shape users’ actions.

Davis employs the example of the coin-lock shopping cart to demonstrate how the mechanisms can be applied to understand the interactions between artifacts with materiality and users within a particular sociocultural context. The coin-lock cart, which evolved from hand-held baskets, *allows* customers to transport a greater quantity of items and thus *encourages* them to make more purchases. Concurrently, the device *requests* customers to insert coins into the designated slot and *demands* them to return the shopping cart if they wish to retrieve their coins. The cart, which was designed to

[47] Donald A Norman, *The Psychology of Everyday Things.* (Basic books, 1988), 8–9.

[48] Jenny L Davis, *How Artifacts Afford: The Power and Politics of Everyday Things* (MIT Press, 2020), 10.

fit typical adults who can handle the cart with their hand(s), *refuses* some users, such as small children and people in wheelchairs or crutches. It also refuses individuals who lack coins. As the shopping cart affords different ranges of options to small children, individuals with limited dexterity in a standing position, and individuals who do not possess coins, the affordance of artifacts is contingent upon the subjects situated within distinct sociocultural and material contexts.[49]

In addition to the aforementioned recognition of the subtle interplay between technology and users, the concept of affordance of technology and its mechanisms promises two further advantages in the analysis of how Korean women select which feminine technologies fit their bodies within a specific sociocultural context. This approach allows us to identify material aspects of artifacts that have often been overlooked in the approach to users of technology that underlies the interpretation of technology. Indeed, in SCOT approaches, the material properties of technology are always of significance. However, the focus has been more on the process of shaping artifacts than on the interaction between the material artifacts and users. In the classic case of bicycle designs, Pinch and Bijker focus on how relevant social groups *interpreted* the same material aspects of the technology in different ways, such as the high-wheel of the “ordinary” bicycle or pneumatic tires, and the debates on the interpretation between the groups.[50]

Semiotic approaches to technology that also emphasize the interpretation of users tend to overlook materiality that users confront. As Ian Hutchby notes, while the concept of interpretation is sufficient for accounting for users’ disparate interpretations, it fails to explain how artifacts constrain users’ interpretations. He criticizes Steve Woolgar’s metaphor of “machine” to describe the designer-user relationship where the designer is conceived as a writer and the user as a reader of the machine/text. He illustrates this with the example of the telephone. Although the telephone was initially designed as a device tool for facilitating business negotiations and household service management, women interpreted the artifact as a means of fostering social interaction. This approach effectively elucidates the manner in which users read/interpret and use text/technology in a manner that diverges from the original intent of the designer/writer. However, in noting that the metaphor overlooks materiality that constrains users’ actions, Hutchby poses the following questions: Does the telephone allow for “the same set of possible interpretations” as the casino slot machine? Would any

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[49] Davis, *How Artifacts Afford*, 8–14.

[50] Trevor J Pinch and Wiebe E Bijker, “The Social Construction of Facts and Artifacts: Or How the Sociology of Science and the Sociology,” in *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, ed. by Wiebe E Bijker, Thomas P Hughes, and Trevor J Pinch, 17–50.

user read the slot machine as a tool for communication? In this regard, he proposes that the affordance of technology as a means to recognize "not only functional but also relational aspects of an object's material presence in the world," which both constrain and enable users' reading or action.[51] In this way, the concept of affordance allows us to recognize material aspects not only in feminine technologies but also in female fluid bodies, which affect users' interpretations and actions in the world.

Another advantage of employing the affordance of technology is that it prompts us to contemplate alternative technologies. As Norman and Davis assert, technology does not force its users but rather nudges them. A customer may insert coins into the cart's coin slot and subsequently return the cart after using it. Otherwise, he or she may choose to leave the cart elsewhere or take the cart home, violating moral expectations or legal regulations. A customer may use a handheld basket, bag, or their own cart. Children or adults who experience difficulties in using carts designed for the typical, abled adult body may request assistance from others. In this sense, even if a user is unable to use a specific technology, or if a technology refuses a user in terms of Davis's mechanism, the user's agency or creativity in identifying alternatives enables them to achieve their intended objective. The majority of studies that have employed the affordance of technology have focused on the "refuse" mechanism, which refers to the process by which technology narrows down the range of potential options or eliminates them entirely. In this regard, the concept of affordance has adequately accounted for how a certain technological system, particularly information technology, incorporates biases related to race, gender, class, disabilities, and geography into its design and perpetuates inequalities by refusing or excluding a certain minority group.[52] However, accepting the concept of affordance of technology, this dissertation emphasizes the presence of alternatives, expanding the analysis beyond a certain technology and thus examining the interaction between users and *technologies*.

Employing the affordance of technology and its mechanisms, this dissertation traces the ways in which women users selected technology that fits their bodies, rejected those that did not, and modified technology to fit their bodies. In doing so, this dissertation acknowledges the materiality of technology, the bodily experiences of women as well as the presence of alternatives. As will be demonstrated, Korean women did not readily accept or reject disposable menstrual pads,

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[51] Ian Hutchby, "Technologies, Texts and Affordances," *Sociology* 35.2 (2001): 441–56.

[52] To name a few, Yuli Patrick Hsieh, "Online Social Networking Skills: The Social Affordances Approach to Digital Inequality," *First Monday* 17.4 (2012); Barbara Barbosa Neves, "Does the Internet Matter for Strong Ties? Bonding Social Capital, Internet Use, and Age-Based Inequality," *International Review of Sociology* 25.3 (2015): 415–33.

contraceptives, and douche solutions without hesitation or deliberation. When Korean women determined which technology fits their bodies, they considered the requests or demands of the technology, evaluated what the technologies would allow them to do, and compared alternatives.

For example, South Korean women did not accept disposable menstrual pads as a convenient commodity as soon as the products were promoted in South Korea in the mid-1960s. Some women found that the manufactured products were not as comfortable as the homemade cotton pads, and were also more expensive. It was not until more women were able to attend to school, pursue employment, and spend more time in public that they began to replace homemade cotton menstrual pads with disposable ones. Moreover, the majority of Korean women found tampons to be unsuitable to their bodies. Tampons, which demand insertion into the vagina, were perceived to negatively affect their "virginity" as well as their health. However, this does not indicate that the disposable menstrual pad was a perfect technology for them. Contrary to the claims made by manufacturers, these disposable pads often proved ineffective in absorbing menstrual blood. This led women to develop techniques to make the pads fit better on their bodies.

The married women who are the primary focus of Chapter 4, which addresses contraceptive technology, illustrate the ways in which women identified and used alternatives. When a specific contraceptive technology refused them, instead of giving up, they sought alternatives, carefully evaluating the technology's demands and requests. When the condom, which demands manual manipulation with hands during sexual intercourse and thus cooperation between partners, refused those women whose partners rejected contraception itself, they sought abortions, inserted intrauterine devices, or took oral contraceptive pills, all of which did not require partners' cooperation. Furthermore, they considered their bodies' responses to the technology as the requests or demands that their bodies should accept along with the technology itself. If the IUDs or oral contraceptive pills turned out not to fit their bodies, as indicated by an increase in vaginal discharge, irregular bleeding, or back pain, women discontinued their use and explored alternative solutions, such as the rhythm method or douches.

In the 1980s, a considerable number of Korean women used douches and various cleansing agents, including "feminine washes" for a multitude of reasons. This phenomenon was driven, in part, by the pervasive idea that maintaining a clean vagina was essential for women's health. Additionally, the increasing prevalence of vaginal changes due to various factors contributed to the rise in the use of feminine washes. However, when they perceived that the technology did not fit their bodies, they ceased using feminine washes and resorted to alternative methods, such as cleansing the vagina with warm water, as they had previously done.

1.5. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation primarily covers South Korea in the latter half of the twentieth century during which time the majority of women had access to and were able to use the aforementioned feminine technologies. However, it also addresses the context of colonial Korea, where new knowledge about the female body and feminine technologies were introduced. Although only a limited number of affluent and educated women were able to access these resources at the time, their influence ultimately reached Korea in the late twentieth century. The second chapter presents the significant political changes that occurred in Korea during the twentieth century. These changes shaped the roles, desires, and choices of women in relation to feminine technologies, influencing the construction of women's bodily experiences and ideas about female bodies in South Korea. In addition to the political changes, the chapter explores the transformations in the Korean healthcare system, which created opportunities for heterogeneous actors, including physicians, pharmacists, and pharmaceutical companies, to interact with women. These interactions took place through the provision of medical services, and the production and distribution of discourses and products associated with female bodies.

The third, fourth, and fifth chapters address feminine technologies pertaining to women's bodily experiences, specifically menstruation, contraception, and vaginal discharge, respectively. Each chapter, including a review of the relevant literature, examines how women determined which technologies fit their bodies. Moreover, it explores how women modified or rejected technologies that did not fit their bodies, and how women's bodily experiences and the feminine technologies associated with them were mutually shaped within the sociocultural and material contexts in which they were situated. The three chapters investigate these discrete bodily experiences and examine how women engaged with the feminine technologies in different ways. However, menstruation, contraception, and vaginal discharge are intertwined in all three chapters, demonstrating the shifts in the meaning of bodily experiences and expectations of how women should manage their fluid—menstruating, ovulating, and discharging from their vaginas—bodies in South Korea.

The third chapter examines the changes in the ways that Korean women chose and used menstrual technologies, with a focus on women's ideas about menstruation and menstruating bodies. Until the mid-1970s, the majority of Korean women used fabric menstrual pads throughout their lifetime, with these items being crafted by their mothers, sisters-in-law, or themselves. The idea that menstruation should be concealed shaped the ways in which women used, washed, and dried these pads. By the late 1970s, Korean women began to accept disposable menstrual products in lieu of homemade pads. Under the influence of preexisting ideas about menstruation, the users of the novel menstrual products devised techniques for concealing used menstrual pads and tinkered with disposable

menstrual products that did not fit certain bodies. Throughout the 1980s, interactions between women users, menstrual product manufacturers, and health and educational experts resulted in a shift in ideas about menstruation. As more women began to view menstruation as a normal and natural biological event and menstruating bodies were increasingly perceived as vulnerable, this new idea shaped women's technological choices in the 1980s in ways that differed from those observed in the 1970s.

The fourth chapter examines the landscape of various contraceptive technologies that married women used, with a focus on the reasons behind their choices of a specific contraceptive technology, beyond the contraceptive effectiveness of the technologies themselves. Since the South Korean government initiated the FPP in 1961, it has introduced several contraceptive technologies and removed legal, economic, and cultural constraints, thereby facilitating women's access to these technologies with greater ease. However, it was women who desired contraception who were the primary actors at the vanguard of the technology's acceptance. While women came to take birth control for granted as the ideal of the "modern mother," their desire for contraception extended beyond merely avoiding unplanned pregnancies to include sexual pleasure, mutual responsibility between husbands and wives in contraception, good parenting, and safe contraceptive methods. The shifts in desires influenced the technological landscape, which saw the coexistence of various contraceptive technologies, including tubal ligation, condoms, the rhythm method, oral contraceptive pills, and abortion. Concurrently, these desires were intertwined with other desires, such as having one or two sons and less painful and planned labor in hospitals. This led to a connection between contraceptive technologies and other technologies, such as Cesarean sections and delivery in hospitals and prenatal ultrasonic screening.

The fifth and final empirical chapter examines the ways in which women used various feminine technologies associated with their vaginas, with a particular focus on the evolution of the concept of the ideal vaginal state, the medical discourse surrounding vaginal discharge, and the experiences of women related to their vaginas and bodies. Until the 1950s, the vast majority of Korean women expressed no concern regarding vaginal secretions. However, throughout the 1960s and 1980s, through efforts of physicians, pharmacists, entrepreneurs and peddlers, in conjunction with a shift in women's bodily experiences, the meaning of the practice underwent a transformation. It became a treatment for a specific disease and subsequently a method of disease prevention. Since the 1980s, the purposes of the practice and relevant products have extended to the improvement of sexual pleasure during intercourse, which has facilitated women's use of so-called female hygiene products. However, this does not indicate that women accepted the vaginal products as the medical experts and promoters said. Rather, the women users considered not only the medical discourses on the vagina

but also their own experiences, such as genital wetness, discomfort, and the amount of vaginal discharge. Consequently, whenever the products proved to be unsuitable for their bodies, they ceased using them and sought alternatives, such as cleansing with water or soap.

1.6. Sources

This dissertation aims to describe the history of feminine technologies from the perspective of women users, a group that has been historically silenced and excluded from the production of written knowledge. Given the paucity of archival documents produced by "marginalized actors," the dissertation draws upon a range of sources, including conventional materials such as vernacular magazines, newspapers, novels, and books intended for the general public, as well as "alternative sources" such as oral histories and interviews with 17 South Korean women born between 1938 and 1974, conducted by the author in 2018 and 2021.[53] It is of particular significance to examine magazines targeted at female readers, as they featured advertisements for body products and medical advice, thereby serving as key sources of information about women's health and the female body. It is also noteworthy that a considerable number of these periodicals included sections dedicated to readers' correspondence and advice columns, through which their inquiries were addressed. In these spaces, readers shared their experiences with various forms of feminine technologies, including tampons, oral contraceptive pills, and tubal ligation. These experiences encompassed not only how their bodies responded to these feminine technologies but also how they modified these technologies to suit their bodies and situations. In addition, they sought counsel on their bodily concerns. In this sense, these sections captured not only women's ideas, desires, and knowledge associated with feminine technologies but also the ways in which women participated in the production of medical knowledge, albeit in ways that differed from those of experts.

The dissertation primarily focuses on vernacular materials accessible to and contributed by women, as well as interviews with them. However, it is also essential to consider governmental documents and publications from institutions such as the Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea (PPFK) in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the sociocultural contexts that have shaped women's desires and choices. Additionally, the dissertation attends to articles in medical journals pertaining to menstruation, contraception, pregnancy, and vaginitis, thereby illustrating physicians' observations of women's bodily experiences. However, as Donna Haraway suggests, this dissertation

[53] Alejanddra Osorio Tarazona, David Drengk, and Animesh Chatterjee, "Rethinking Global History of Technology from Alternative Archives," *TG Technikgeschichte*, 88.2 (2021): 202–6.

acknowledges that these articles are "situated and embodied knowledge," like other scientific knowledge, and not neutral, objective, or truthful facts.[54] In light of this situatedness, the dissertation meticulously examines the voices and experiences of women embedded within the words, numbers, and graphs of the academic papers. By connecting the disparate, yet interconnected, accounts of women's experiences across temporal, geographical, and formal boundaries, the dissertation endeavors to construct a comprehensive tapestry of women's bodily experiences, desires, and the contextual milieu in which they engaged with technologies.

To access newspapers, I used the Naver News Library, which is operated by the Naver Corporation, a South Korean online platform. The library provides online access to newspaper articles from five South Korean major newspapers, including *The Dong-a Ilbo* and *The Chosun Ilbo,* published between 1920 and 1999, and *The Kyunghyang Shinmun, Maeil Business Newspaper, and The Hankyoreh* between 1945 and 1999. I accessed a variety of materials, including magazines, novels, books, videos, and reports associated with studies through the National Library, the National Assembly Library in South Korea, and several Korean university libraries including Seoul National University Library, Yonsei University Library, and Ewha Womans University. The majority of the governmental documents that I cite were sourced from the National Archives of Korea. Some unpublished oral histories and reports related to the FPP were accessed through the National Institute of Korean History. In instances where I refer to interviewees from my own interviews, I use pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

Note on Romanization and Translation

With a few exceptions, the McCune-Reischauer romanization system is employed for the transcription of Korean terms and names. Notable exceptions include the names of some prominent politicians who are already familiar to Western audiences, such as Chunghee Park and Syngman Rhee, as well as researchers who have published articles under their English names. A further exception pertains to a group of geographical names. In the case of East Asian names, the family name is given first. This method is applied to citations of Korean scholars whose works have been published in the Korean language. While I endeavor to translate all Korean terms into English, I retain original terms when no commensurate English equivalents exist. This is done to maintain the contexts in which the words were coined and used. For materials and literature written in non-English characters, including Korean, Chinese, and Japanese characters, I provide both the English titles as well as the original titles in the

[54] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14.3 (1988): 575–99.

footnotes and bibliography. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Korean into English are my own.

2. Society, Politics, and Women's Role in South Korea

The second chapter provides an overview of Korean history with a focus on women's roles, education, and healthcare systems as the sociocultural contexts that influenced the ways in which Korean women were involved with feminine technologies in the twentieth century. As previously stated, these ways were related to sociocultural contexts, the material properties of the technologies, and women's bodies. The shifts in women's roles, education, and healthcare systems in South Korea that resulted from political events affected discrete but interconnected technologies beyond the individual feminine technologies, thereby rendering the landscape of feminine technologies.

While this dissertation is primarily concerned with the history of South Korea from 1945 to the early 1990s, this chapter begins with an examination of the roles of women, the educational system, and the medical system in the Chosŏn Dynasty and colonial Korea. Despite unprecedented and drastic changes in society through the twentieth century, some values and ideas implanted during both periods continued to exert a profound influence on the lives of contemporary South Koreans. The influence of Confucianism on South Korean culture has been "profound and pervasive."[1] As is the case in several postcolonial countries, the colonial legacy has had a profound and pervasive influence on South Korean society in the postcolonial era. Subsequently, the chapter addresses the evolving roles of women in the context of the "national modernization" project, as well as the expansion of the education and healthcare systems, which were largely shaped by the Korean War and Park Chunghee's regime (1961–1979). Lastly, it describes the role of women as the ideal housewives, which was established by a gendered education system and significant changes in the healthcare system in the 1980s, when consumption was flourishing under the second authoritarian government of Chun Doo-hwan.

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[1] Young Whan Kihl, "The Legacy of Confucian Culture and South Korean Politics and Economics: An Interpretation," *Korea Journal* 34.3 (1994): 37–53.

2.1. The Onset of Japanese Colonial Rule

Since its establishment in 1392, the Chosŏn Dynasty had remained relatively stable for over five centuries. By the sixteenth century, Confucianism had become a foundational political and social order in the relatively stable society, shaping the everyday lives of the people, particularly the *yangban* ruling class.[2] From its inception, the Chosŏn Dynasty maintained a close relationship with China as a vassal state and Japan, despite occasional invasions by both countries. Through these two countries, Korea was introduced not only to East Asian knowledge but also to Western scientific knowledge and objects, including mechanical alarm clocks, telescopes, and eyeglasses. However, with a few exceptions, the impact of new Western knowledge and things was limited.[3]

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Korea underwent a series of profound political transformations. These included the arrival of Western powers, the collapse of the Chosŏn dynasty, and finally, the imposition of colonial rule by Japan. These upheavals resulted in substantial changes to the sociopolitical landscape of the "Hermit Kingdom." The signing of the Treaty of Kanghwa with Japan in 1876 led to the Korean peninsula becoming a site of imperial competition between China, the United States, Britain, Russia, and Japan. The culmination of the negotiations and conflicts among the imperial powers was the annexation of Korea to the Empire of Japan in 1910. The period of colonial rule lasted for approximately thirty-five years.[4] During the period of "the age of high imperialism," a plethora of new ideas, knowledge, and artifacts—Western medicine and science, new roles for women, patent medicines, and much else—were introduced in Korea.[5] Intertwined with Confucian values and social changes, these new ideas and artifacts shaped the colonial landscape in Korea. These would

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[2] In the Chosŏn Dynasty, except for the royal family, society consisted of four classes: the ruling class, called *yangban*; the upper middle class, called *chungin*; the commoners, called *sangmin*; the lowest class, called *ch'ŏnmin*, which included specific occupations such as slaters, singers, dancers, and shamans; and slaves, who were called *nobi*. In the late eighteenth century, the class system began to break down and was officially abolished in 1894.

[3] The few exceptions include Western astronomy, which the state actively accepted to make the calendar through China. Eyeglasses could be another exception. Eyeglasses were widely used in the early seventeenth century by not only men in the ruling class but also "artisans," "women who do needlework," "servants," and "butchers." Jun Young-hoon 전용훈, *Han'guk ch'ŏnmunhaksa 한국 천문학사 (The History of Astronomy in Korea)* (Paju: Tŭllyŏk, 2017); Kang Myŏng-gwan 강명관, *Chosŏne on sŏyang mulgŏndŭl 조선에 온 서양 물건들 (The Western Things That Arrived in Chosŏn)* (Seoul: Humanist, 2015) [Aladin E-book], Ch.1.

[4] Although the Japanese Empire annexed Korea in 1910, in 1906, Japan had already established a Residency-General (*t'onggampu*) and started to rule Korea virtually.

[5] Kirk W. Larsen, "Competing Imperialisms in Korea," in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History*, ed. by Michael J Seth (Oxon; NY: Routledge, 2016), 27–42.

have long-lasting effects on people's everyday lives, including women's bodily experiences in modern South Korea.

Emerging Women for the Nation at Stake

In the late Chosŏn Dynasty, Confucianism established a system of gender relations in which women were subordinated to their fathers, husbands, and sons within the context of paternal lineages. During the Koryŏ Dynasty, which had preceded the Chosŏn Dynasty, and in the early years of the Chosŏn Dynasty, women were accorded rights equivalent to those of their husbands regarding marriage and divorce, as well as to those of their brothers regarding inheritance. However, by the sixteenth century, as Confucianism became a central tenet of everyday life, primarily among the ruling class, women's rights in society underwent a significant transformation. The Confucian tradition conceptualizes the relationship between men and women as hierarchical, with men occupying a superior position. This hierarchical structure is founded upon a cosmological analogy in which men are likened to heaven and women to earth. In the scheme, a woman's "first and foremost duty" is "to preserve the purity of family tradition and to continue the family line by giving birth to sons."[6]

In the late nineteenth century, with the geopolitical changes in East Asia, Korean women began to assume new roles. In 1894, the Chosŏn government requested Chinese military assistance in suppressing a domestic revolt known as the *Imogullan*. In response, China deployed troops to Korea and subsequently Japan dispatched troops under the pretext of protecting Japanese people in Korea. This resulted in the Sino-Japanese War, which was fought for supremacy not only over Chosŏn but also over East Asia. The war prompted Korean leaders to perceive imperialism as a significant threat, which in turn gave rise to a reform movement aimed at "civilization and enlightenment" of Chosŏn-Korea "as a nation." It should be noted that the reformers' vision of women's roles was not significantly different from that of the Chosŏn Dynasty. The leaders and intellectuals anticipated that women would assume the traditional roles of "filial daughters, faithful wives, or sacrificing mothers" within the domestic sphere. Furthermore, they endorsed women's education as a means of cultivating such daughters, wives, and mothers. Nevertheless, the newly envisioned roles provided opportunities for women to pursue formal education, which had previously been largely exclusive to men in the ruling class. Since 1886, educational institutions for girls have been established by Christian missionaries, the state, and individuals with the objective of cultivating each of them as a "Wise

[6] Hyaeweol Choi, "Constructions of Marriage and Sexuality in Modern Korea," in *Handbook of Sexuality Studies in East Asia*, ed. by Mark McLelland and Vera Mackie (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 87–100.

Mother, Good Wife [*hyŏnmo yangch'ŏ*]."[7] This vision of the wise mother and good wife, as espoused by the Japanese ideology of the "good wife, wise mother [*ryōsai kenbo*]," was intertwined with the Confucian norm of "women's virtue [*pudŏk*]" and the "Victorian notion of domesticity," which was introduced by American Protestant missionaries.[8]

As a consequence of Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, Korean social reformers anticipated a more prominent role for women, whom they regarded as "the mothers of the nation." In their view, the reconstruction of the homeland would necessitate the production of "strong, healthy bodies" among women.[9] Meanwhile, the Japanese Governor-General of Korea (hereafter GGK) concentrated on women as a constituent element of the colony's total population. However, following the Great Depression and the territorial expansion of the 1930s, Japanese authorities began to view women as reproductive subjects. They urged Korean women to give birth to healthy children who could become soldiers and workers, and to manage the home economy effectively as part of the wartime economy.[10] During the wartime around 1937, the ideal of the "wise mother and good wife" encouraged by Korean social reformers was in turn integrated into the Japanese empire's colonial projects.

A New Meaning of Education

In the early decades of the twentieth century, only a small proportion of the Korean population had access to education, with women being particularly disadvantaged in this regard. During the colonial period, while the Koreans' enrollment rates increased gradually until 1942, less than two-thirds of the eligible males and less than one-third of the eligible females were enrolled in elementary school. The enrollment rate in secondary schools was less than 1.5% across the board, regardless of gender.[11]

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[7] M. Sonja Kim, "Women, Gender, and Social Change," in *Modern Korean History*, ed. by Michael J Seth, 141–52.

[8] Choi, "Constructions of Marriage and Sexuality," 90.

[9] Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945* (Univ of California Press, 2008), 163.

[10] M. Sonja Kim, "Women, Gender, and Social Change," 145–6; So Hyunsoog 소현숙, "Kŭndae'eŭi yŏlmanggwa ilssangsaenghwarŭi singminhwa: iljesigi saenghwalgaesŏnundonggwa chendŏjŏngch'irŭl chungsimŭro 근대에의 열망과 일상생활의 식민화: 일제시기 생활개선운동과 젠더정치를 중심으로 (A Desire for the 'Modern' and the Colonialization of Everyday Lives with a Focus on the Life-Improving Movement and Gender Politics during Japanese Colonial Period)," in *Ilssangsaro ponŭn han'guk kŭnhyŏndaesa 일상사로 보는 한국근현대사 (Modern and Contemporary Korean History Reflected on Everyday Life)*, ed. by Lee sang-rok 이상록 and Lee Yoo-jae 이유재 (Seoul: Ch'aekkwa hamkke, 2006), 121–73.

[11] Park Ch'ŏr-hŭi 박철희, "Singminjigi han'guk chungdŭnggyoyuk yŏn'gu 植民地期 韓國 中等敎育 硏究 (A Study on the Korean Secondary Education in the Japanese Colonial Period: Focused on "Godeung Botong School" in the 1920s–1930s)" (doctoral thesis, Seoul National University, 2002), 45; Kim Su-jin 김수진, "1920-30nyŏndae shinyŏsŏngdamnon'gwa

Nevertheless, an examination of the education system during the colonial period sheds light on the significance of education in Korean society, particularly for Korean women. This aspiration for education shaped their choices regarding feminine technology, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Following the liberation from Japanese colonial rule, the educational aspirations that had been fostered during the colonial period resulted in a notable increase in the number of girls attending schools. In this environment, girls would learn the roles expected of them as women, as envisioned by the state, physicians, and educators. Their bodies would also become more visible in public.

In the 1900s, in addition to the missionary efforts, the government initiated the establishment of a limited number of elementary and secondary schools as part of its broader reform agenda for the country. However, these public schools were hampered by a lack of financial resources and, more significantly, an insufficient enrollment. Prior to this period, the prevailing attitude toward education among Koreans was largely indifferent.[12] In the 1910s, the colonial authorities implemented a Japanese educational system influenced by the American model, rather than the European one. As the system aimed to cultivate a workforce in the colony for the empire through a system of practical education known as common (*bot'ong*) education, the Japanese authorities differentiated the Korean schooling system from that in the mainland. In addition to different curricula, the Korean system differed from that of Japan in that elementary education in Korea was not compulsory and the requisite number of years for graduation was shorter than in schools for Japanese. This rendered it more challenging for Korean students to attend advanced schools with entrance qualifications that aligned with the Japanese schooling system.

In the 1920s, the educational system underwent a significant transformation. The GGK sought to align the schooling system with the Japanese system, if only in appearance. This was one of the measures introduced in an effort to appease the Cultural Rule (*munhwa t'ongchi*) following the nationwide mass protests known as the March 1st Movement in 1919. This resulted in a shift in the attitude toward education among Koreans. In principle, anyone could attend school, regardless of nationality or class. Graduation from a series of schools appeared to offer what were considered modern occupations, such as officials, lawyers, educators, and physicians. Despite facing implicit

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sangjingŭi kusŏng 1920-30 년대 신여성담론과 상징의 구성 (Excess of the Modern: Three Archetypes of the New Woman and Colonial Identity in Korea, 1920s to 1930s)" (doctoral thesis, Seoul National University, 2005), 98.

[12] Wi-Yŏng 위영, "Kŭndaeŭi paeumgwa karŭch'im 근대의 배움과 가르침 (Learning and Teaching in Modern Korea)," in *Paeumgwa karŭch'imŭi kkŭt'ŏmnŭn yŏljŏng 배움과 가르침의 끝없는 열정 (Infinite Passion for Learning and Teaching)*, ed. by Kuksap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Tusandonga, 2005), 234–301.

discrimination and limited job opportunities, an increasing number of Koreans began to view education as a significant means of social mobility.[13]

The trajectory of women's education and the expectations placed upon them diverged significantly from those of men. As previously stated, the advent of modern schooling provided women with access to educational opportunities. In the wake of the March 1st Movement of 1919, the general surge of interest in education resulted in a notable increase in the number of women enrolling in secondary schools. However, the number of female students in secondary schools remained relatively low, and some of them discontinued their studies due to the prevailing attitudes among Korean parents, particularly in rural areas and among the former ruling class, who regarded women's education as "nonsense." The majority of Koreans held the view that the education of women who were to marry was unnecessary and potentially harmful, as it could erode the traditional virtues that placed a high value on reverence toward husbands and parents-in-law. This perspective persisted despite the objective of female student education, which was to cultivate wise mothers and good wives.[14] As a result, less than one percent of the eligible female population enrolled in secondary schools. Only a small number of graduates from these schools proceeded to higher education institutions, such as schools for teachers, vocational schools, and on rare occasions, colleges abroad, with the most attending universities in Japan. Among the educated women, a limited number of them were employed primarily in the fields associated with the women's role as caretakers of their families and the nation, including medicine, nursing, and education.[15]

The Encounter between Traditional Medicine and Biomedicine

The profound transformation that occurred in Chosŏn in the late nineteenth century led to the introduction of Western or biomedicine in the country, facilitated by the efforts of foreign physicians. As a result of the implementation of a series of treaties, Korea was obliged to permit the entry of

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[13] Kim Tae-wan 김태완, "Ilje kangjŏmgiŭi paeumgwa karŭch'im 일제 강점기의 배움과 가르침 (Learning and Teaching in Korea during the Japanese Colonial Rule)," in *Infinite Passion for Learning and Teaching*, ed. by Kuksap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe, 304–75.

[14] Park Jung-ae 박정애, "Singminji chosŏn yŏsŏngdŭrŭi paeum yŏlmanggwa kŭnhwayŏhakkyo 식민지 조선 여성들의 배움 열망과 근화여학교 (Joseon [*sic*] Women's Eagerness to Learn and Geunwha Women's School in the Japanese Colonial Period)," *Inmun'gwahagyŏn'gu* 22 (2016): 39–61.

[15] Kang Hye-kyng 강혜경, "Sungmyŏngyŏgobo maenghyusagŏnŭro pon singminji yŏsŏnggyoyuk 숙명여고보 맹휴사건으로 본 식민지 여성교육 (Colonial Women Education Seen by the Student Strike of Sookmyung Women's School)," *Han'guktongnibundongsayŏn'gu* 37 (2010): 265–305; Kim Tae-wan 김태완, "Ilje kangjŏmgi," 370–73.

foreign nationals. This resulted in the arrival of Japanese physicians in Korea, who were responsible for treating Japanese individuals residing in foreign settlements. Additionally, missionary physicians from the United States, Canada, and Great Britain arrived in Korea with the objectives of practicing Western medicine and thus spreading the gospel. During the colonial period, the Japanese authorities established a medical system that favored Western medicine. This system permitted Koreans to enroll in medical schools in Korea and obtain certification from the authorities, thereby enabling them to join the biomedical practitioner group. Korean and Japanese physicians not only provided patient care but also produced medical discourses, which were disseminated through a variety of media, including newspapers, magazines, and lectures.[16] As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 5, medical knowledge about women's health was a prominent topic in public medical discourse, reflecting the societal emphasis on the role of women as mothers of the nation.

However, the advent of biomedicine did not result in the complete replacement of medical knowledge. Despite the GGK's stance on traditional medicine as "non-scientific" and its intention to abolish it in the future, the number of physicians remained inadequate to meet the needs of the Korean population. Consequently, in 1913, the GGK implemented a dual yet hierarchical medical licensing system for physicians and traditional doctors, who were designated as medical students (*ŭisaeng*), thereby temporarily acknowledging traditional medicine. While a limited number of physicians treated a select group of wealthy patients in urban areas, traditional doctors provided care to people in rural areas.[17] The coexistence of biomedicine and traditional medicine was not merely institutional but also terminological. Indeed, the majority of Korean physicians held a negative view of the efficacy of traditional medicine as a counterpart to biomedicine.[18] Nevertheless, physicians did not

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[16] Choi Eun-kyung 최은경, "Chosŏnilbo ŭihaksangdamk'onŏ 「kajŏngŭihak」esŏ tŭrŏnan 1930nyŏndae ŭihak chisigŭi t'ŭkching 조선일보 의학상담코너 「가정의학」에서 드러난 1930 년대 의학 지식의 특징 (The Characteristics of Medical Knowledge in the 1930s Appeared in *Chosun Ilbo* 'Gajung Euihak(Family Medicine)'," *Yŏksayŏn'gu* 35 (2018): 145–75; Hong Yang-hee 홍양희, "Singminjisigi 'ŭihak' 'chisik'kwa chosŏnŭi 'chŏnt'ong': k'udoŭi 'puin'gwahak'chŏng chishikŭl chungshimŭro 식민지시기 '의학' '지식'과 조선의 '전통': 쿠도(工藤武城)의 '婦人科學'적 지식을 중심으로 ('Medical Knowledge' and 'Tradition' of Colonial Korea: Focused on Kudo's 'Gynecology'-based Knowledge)," *Ŭisahak* 22.2 (2013): 579–616.

[17] Yeo In-sok 여인석 et al., *Han'gugŭihaksa 한국의학사 (The History of Medicine in Korea)* (Seoul: Yŏksagonggan, 2018), 254-5.

[18] Yeo In-sok 여인석, "Hanmalgwa singminji sigi sŏyangŭihagŭi hanŭihak insikkwa suyong 한말과 식민지 시기 서양의학의 한의학 인식과 수용 (Traditional Medicine Seen from the Perspective of Western Medicine During the Late 19th and Early 20th Century in Korea)," *Ŭisahak* 16.2 (2007): 161–76.

entirely discard traditional medical terminology. This amalgamation of biomedicine and traditional medicine influenced Korean women's ideas about their bodies as well as feminine technologies, as will be examined in detail in Chapter 5.

While the impact of such physicians on ordinary people was constrained by the limited accessibility of medical care and the prevalence of illiteracy, that of patent medicines (*meayak*) was far more pervasive. In accordance with the global proliferation of patent medicine in the early twentieth century, Japanese entrepreneurs in foreign settlements introduced patent medicines, which led to the flourishing of the industry in Korea. Similarly, Korean entrepreneurs also capitalized on the thriving industry. In addition to offering Western patent medicines, including quinine, these merchants developed their own traditional remedies, such as a liquid digestive aid called Lifesaving Water (*hwalmyŏngsu*).[19] The popularity of patent medicines was nationwide. By 1935, approximately 45,000 peddlers and small retailers throughout the country were engaged in the sale of patent medicines. In addition to folk remedies, patent medicine became the "primary treatment option" among the general public.[20] When these treatments proved ineffective, people would seek the care of traditional doctors or Western physicians.[21]

Advertisements for patent medicines, in conjunction with medical advice published in newspapers primarily authored by physicians, constituted significant conduits through which medical discourse and knowledge were disseminated. In particular, manufacturers of products for women's diseases blended ideas about health and the body based on biomedicine, traditional medicine, and the expectations for women, reflecting and reinforcing women's desires and concerns.[22] The manufacturers' strategies persisted in advertisements for feminine technologies associated with menstruation and vaginal discharges in postcolonial Korea, shaping women's knowledge of their bodies and diseases and their technological choices, as will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.

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[19] Soyoung Suh, *Naming the Local: Medicine, Language, and Identity in Korea Since the Fifteenth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2017), 114–5.

[20] Hoi-eun Kim, "Adulterated Intermediaries: Peddlers, Pharmacists, and the Patent Medicine Industry in Colonial Korea (1910–1945)," *Enterprise & Society* 20.4 (2019): 939–77.

[21] Yi Ggond-me 이꽃메, "Singminjisigi ilbaninŭi hanŭihak insikkwa ŭiyak iyong 식민지시기 일반인의 한의학 인식과 의약 이용 (A Study on the General Public Understanding and Utilization of Korean Traditional Medicine in Colonial Period)," *Ŭisahak* 15.2 (2006): 227–36.

[22] Park Jin-kyung 박진경, "Chilbyŏngŭi kŭndae: iljegangjŏmgi puinbyŏngŭi ŭimiwa maeyakkwanggo 질병의 근대: 일제강점기 부인병의 의미와 매약광고 (Modernity of Disease: Exploring Meanings of Women's Disease and Patent Medical Advertisement in Colonial Korea)," *Asiayŏsŏngyŏn'gu* 60.3 (2021): 45–93.

2.2. The Republic of Korea and a Long Military Dictatorship

In August 1945, with the Japanese emperor's declaration of surrender to the Allied Forces, Korea was liberated. However, as was the case in numerous postcolonial countries, the liberation resulted in American and European intervention in Korea. As had been anticipated by the Korean political leaders, the year of liberation saw the deployment of Soviet troops to the northern sector of the 38th parallel, with the United States occupying the southern portion of the area. These forces were subsequently withdrawn following the 1948 declarations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), led by Kim Il-Sung, and the Republic of Korea (ROK), led by Rhee Syngman.[23]

Following a two-year interval, the Korean War commenced. The total number of casualties reached 42,000 combatants and one million civilians.[24] Furthermore, the war resulted in significant economic distress due to the extensive destruction of infrastructure across the majority of the Korean peninsula. South Korea was compelled to seek external economic assistance, primarily from the United States. The government was dependent on foreign assistance, which constituted 72.5% of its revenue between 1953 and 1960.[25] In the context of political and economic instability, President Rhee and his party's disputed election in 1960, coupled with pervasive corruption, prompted the urban poor and students to engage in street rallies and attacks on governmental buildings in protest against the government. This resulted in the president's resignation and subsequent formation of the Chang Myon Cabinet. However, after a mere nine months, Chang's cabinet was dismissed by Major General Park Chunghee and his cohorts. They asserted that they could resolve the societal issues immediately and would subsequently transfer power to a civilian government. The public did not appear to welcome the military coup. Nevertheless, those who had become disillusioned with Chang's cabinet, which had failed to reform the corrupt system or alleviate economic hardship, did not resist.[26]

In a deviation from his initial pledge, Park sought and secured the presidency in 1963, 1967, and 1971. In 1972, Park enacted a new constitution, the *Yusin hŏnbŏp,* which enabled him to serve as president for virtually his entire tenure. This was achieved by abolishing term limits and replacing

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[23] Jongsoo Lee, "The Division of Korea and the Rise of Two Koreas, 1945–1948," in *Modern Korean History,* ed. by Michael J Seth, 171–9.

[24] Grace Chae J, "The Korea War and Its Politics," in *Modern Korean History*, ed. by Michael J Seth, 180–94.

[25] Kim Il-young 김일영, "Isŭngman chŏngbuŭi sanŏpchŏngch'aekkwa rent'ŭch'ugu kŭrigo kyŏngjebaljŏn 이승만 정부의 산업정책과 렌트추구 그리고 경제발전 (Industrial Policy, Rent-Seeking, and Economic Development under Syngman Rhee's Government)," *Segyejŏngch'i* 8.0 (2007): 171–203.

[26] Kwon Bo-due-rae 권보드래, "4·19wa 5·16, chayuwa ppangŭi t'op'osŭ 4·19 와 5·16, 자유와 빵의 토포스 (The Topology of April Uprising and May 16 Coup d'état)," *Sanghŏhakpo*, 30 (2010): 85–134.

direct presidential elections with indirect elections. With the *Yusin* Constitution in place, Park's regime lasted for approximately two decades until his assassination by one of his closest associates in 1979.[27]

Over the past two decades, the Park government has initiated numerous projects under the auspices of national economic development and national modernization (*chokuk kŏndaehwa*), including a series of Five-Year Economic and Social Development Plans, the Family Planning Program, and the New Village Movement (*Saemaul undong*).[28] To achieve the objectives of these programs, the Park regime sought to discipline people as "duty-bounded nationals" by assigning specific roles and responsibilities based on their gender, social status, age, and geographic location. This was done with the purpose of aligning with the vision of a modernized nation that the Park government sought to establish.[29] The question of whether governmental projects contributed to economic development remains a topic of contention among scholars. Nevertheless, it is evident that South Korea experienced unparalleled economic expansion during this era, with an annual growth rate of approximately 9% through accelerated industrialization and reliance on exports in the 1960s and 1970s.[30] In accordance with the responsibilities as nationals granted by the government, the rapid economic growth had significant, albeit gradual, impacts on people's lives, including women's bodily experiences, as will be discussed in the following chapters.

Korean War, Women, and Education

The Korean War had a profound impact on all aspects of Korean society. In South Korea alone, among its population of twenty million, 470,000 were either dead or injured, and 300,000 were listed as missing.[31] A notable proportion of the casualties were men in their late teens, twenties, and thirties.

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[27] Gregg A Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2009), 1–11, 116.

[28] The term "national modernization" refers not to the analytical concept in sociology that refers to the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a modern, secular, urban, industrial society but to the umbrella term and goal used by the Park Chunghee government for its development projects.

[29] Seungsook Moon, *Militarized Modernity and Gendered Citizenship in South Korea* (Duke University Press, 2005), 2.

[30] Park Tae-gyun 박태균, "Pakchŏnghŭi chŏngbu sigirŭl t'onghae pon paljŏn'gukka tamnone taehan pip'anjŏk siron 박정희 정부 시기를 통해 본 발전국가 담론에 대한 비판적 시론 (Reassessing the Developmental State Theory through Park Era)," *Yŏksawa hyŏnsil* 74 (2009): 15–43.

[31] *U.N. Demographic Yearbook*, 1960, 214. As cited in Chu In-ho 주인호 and Kim Kyung-ja 김경자, "1949nyŏn'gwa 1959nyŏndoŭi in'gujosagyŏlgwae kwanhan punsŏkp'yŏngga 1949 年과 1959 年度의 人口調査資料에 對한 分析評價 (Evaluation of 1949 and 1959 Population Data for Korea)," *In'gumunjenonjip* 4 (1967): 105–11; National Archives of Korea,

The extensive destruction of infrastructure in South Korea resulted in significant economic challenges. This led to a perception among South Koreans that the state lacked the capacity and social security structures to safeguard their lives. Consequently, the idea that one's family is the primary, or at least one of the crucial social resources for survival, became deeply entrenched in South Korean society.[32]

The substantial number of husbands and fathers who were deceased, disabled or absent from the family, which had become a unit for survival throughout the war, compelled Korean women to assume the role of breadwinner, which had previously been that of men. Wives of war victims engaged in commercial activities that included peddling, sewing, and prostitution. Some women with capital and skills operated their own restaurants or boutiques. This economic engagement was not limited to war widows and wives of disabled soldiers. Married women with more stable finances participated in *kye*, which is a Korean form of a rotating savings and credit association, for living expenses, children's education, and housing purchases.[33] This situation resulted in women recognizing their roles in the family and society as distinct from the roles of wise mothers and good wives for their husbands, children, and the state in colonial Korea.

The liberation, war, and resultant turmoil served to intensify the desire for education that had already emerged during the colonial period. In the aftermath of the liberation, a select group of educated Koreans were able to assume a multitude of occupations that had previously been held almost exclusively by the Japanese. These included positions in government, education, and other professional capacities. During the war, college students were exempt from the conscription process. Consequently, in contrast to property and houses that were burned, destroyed, or lost, educational certifications and school connections became the "most reliable" measure for survival.[34] The practical

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"625 Chŏnjaeng: p'ihae hyŏnhwang t'onggye 625 전쟁: 피해 현황 통계 (The Damage Statistics from Korea War)," <https://theme.archives.go.kr/next/625/damageStatistic.do.> [accessed, 2 October 2022].

[32] Kyung-Sup Chang, "Compressed Modernity and Its Discontents: South Korean Society in Transtion," *Economy and Society* 28.1 (1999): 30–55.

[33] Lee Myung-hwi 이명휘, "1954–1956nyŏn han'guk yŏsŏngsinyongjojigŭi kŭmyungsijangesŏŭi yŏkhal 1954–1956 년 한국 여성신용조직의 금융시장에서의 역할 (The Role of Women Credit Associations in Korean Financial Market, 1954–1956)," *Yŏsŏnggwa yŏksa* 23 (2015): 101–29.

[34] Oh Sung-chul 오성철, "Han'guginŭi kyoyugyŏlgwa kukka 한국인의 교육열과 국가 (Koreans' Education Fever and the Nation)," in *Taehanmin'guk kyoyuk 70nyŏn 대한민국 교육 70 년 (Education in Republic of Korea for Seventy Years)* (Seoul: National Museum of Korean Contemporary History, 2015), ed. by Oh Sung-chul, 14–78; For the comprehensive discussion of relations between family and economy, and politics in South Korea, see Kyung-Sup Chang, *South Korea under Compressed Modernity: Familial Political Economy in Transition* (Routledge, 2010).

power of education that the Korean people witnessed was intertwined with the long-held Confucian beliefs that placed a high value on education. This intertwining influenced not only the upper and middle classes but also the poor. While even public schools resorted to charging parents tuition to compensate for the lack of government support, most Korean parents were willing to bear the burden of education because of the high value placed on it by Korean society.

By the 1950s, there had been a notable increase in the enrollment rate. By 1955, despite ongoing challenges, 90% of the eligible population was enrolled in elementary school. Through the 1960s and 1970s, as the Park government abolished a series of entrance exams for secondary schools that restricted educational opportunities, the enrollment rate in secondary schools increased significantly as well. By 1980, the enrollment rate in middle schools reached 73.3%, and the rate in high schools was 48.8%.[35]

This signified that a substantial proportion of the Korean population was incorporated into a homogeneous educational system wherein the majority of students pursued the consistent curricula based on textbooks that were either authored or endorsed by the state. In particular, the Park government required the use of identical textbooks, which were written by the Ministry of Culture and Education and applied to all subjects in elementary schools and major subjects in secondary schools. Indeed, all remaining subjects were also subject to governmental approval.[36] As the number of students increased, so too did the competition for admission to prestigious universities, which in turn contributed to the growth of the private education market.[37] The preoccupation with education in South Korea, sometimes referred to as "education fever" because of its pathological implications, became a national or social phenomenon. This ardent aspiration for education would shape Korean society and families, including women's bodily experiences, as will be examined in subsequent chapters.

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[35] Go sun 고선, "Sensŏsŭ charyorŭl iyonghan ch'o·chung·ko ch'wihakkyŏljŏngyoin punsŏk 센서스 자료를 이용한 초·중·고 취학결정요인 분석, 1960–1990 (Determinants of Enrollment in Elementary and Secondary Education: Evidence from Census Data, 1960–1990)," *Han'gukkyoyuk* 39.4 (2012): 83–104.

[36] Choe Jin-won 최진원, "Kyogwasŏ parhaengjedo pyŏnhwawa chŏjakkwŏnbŏp che25choŭi chaego: kyogwasŏ chayubarhaengje ch'ujin'gwa kwallyŏnhayŏ 교과서 발행제도 변화와 저작권법 제 25 조의 재고: 교과서 자유발행제 추진과 관련하여 (The Change of Textbook Publishing System and the Reconsideration on the Article 25 of Copyright Act - In Relation to Promoting Freely-published Textbook System)," *Sanŏpchaesan'gwŏn* 66 (2021): 367–415.

[37] Park Hwan-bo 박환보, "Haebang ihu hakkyogyoyuk p'aengch'angŭi kyumowa t'ŭkching 해방 이후 학교교육 팽창의 규모와 특징 (The Scale and Characteristics of the Expansion of School Education after Liberation)," in *Education in Republic of Korea for Seventy Years*, ed. by Oh Sung-chul, 145–208.

Women in the "National Modernization" Project

The Park government implemented a series of measures under the "national modernization," which served to mobilize the populace. The measures encompassed a range of approaches, from compulsory programs such as conscription to relatively discretionary initiatives like the New Village Movement and the Family Planning Program (*kajokkyehoeksaŏp*) (hereafter FPP). These programs assigned different roles to individuals based on their gender, age, and geographical locations. For instance, the government expected men to fulfill the roles of "protector and family provider," and industrial warriors who would contribute labor following their mandatory military service. In contrast, women were expected to serve as "reproducer[s] of children and daily life."[38] The women's role was represented by the "wise mother and good wife" who supports her husband in the domestic sphere as a housewife.

Although the expression had already emerged in the colonial period, the specific expectations associated with the role of the "wise mother and good wife" underwent a distinct transformation in response to the evolving circumstances surrounding women. In the 1960s, South Korea was experiencing difficulties in rehabilitating the destruction caused by the war. During this period, the ideal housewife was perceived as a budget manager for families with limited resources. To encourage women to be the ideal parsimonious and thrifty housewife, the women's magazine *Yŏwŏn* conducted periodic essay competitions and the government invited the winners to the Blue House, the executive office of the president. In the late 1960s, the government implemented a series of more tangible and far-reaching measures with the objective of reducing household consumption, with a particular focus on housewives. One such measure was the campaign of the "Home Accounting Movement (*kagyebujŏkki undong*)," conducted by the government-supported Headquarters for Women's Savings in Living (*yŏsŏngjŏch'uksaenghwalchunganghoe*). The organization proposed the "Model for Household Budget (*sodŭkpyŏl kagyejich'ulmohyŏng*)," which outlined comprehensive saving and expenditure strategies tailored to individual households. It urged housewives to meticulously plan household budgets and thus save more money, assuming that increased household savings would provide support to domestic companies that were reliant on private loans at the time.[39]

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[38] Moon, *Militarized Modernity,* 2.

[39] Han Hyung-sung 한형성, "1970nyŏndae pakchŏnghŭi ch'ejeesŏŭi 'kagyebujŏkki undong' 1970 년대 박정희 체제에서의 '가계부적기 운동' ('Home Accounting Movement' in Park Chung Hee Regime in the 1970s)," *Kyŏngyŏngsahak* 82 (2017): 203–30.

In a similar manner, the state initiated campaigns on nutrition and family planning that encouraged married women, as the managers of their households, to contribute to national economic development. To illustrate, the Park government implemented a campaign to address the rice shortage by encouraging the consumption of non-rice grains and flour, which were in surplus due to the influx of American food aid. The government elucidated the scientific rationale behind the economic imperative, underscoring the importance of nutritional value and a balanced diet.[40] The FPP required married couples to regulate their fertility in order to curb the country's elevated population growth, which was perceived as an obstacle to economic advancement. Through these measures, the government encouraged nearly all segments of the population to modify aspects of their daily lives, including dietary habits and childbearing practices. However, it assigned the primary responsibility for achieving these objectives to married women, as mothers, wives, and household managers, as will be explored in Chapter 4.

In addition to such campaigns for married women, the government attempted to use education to cultivate female adolescents into the ideal wise mothers and good wives. Despite discrepancies in the total number of years of education and secondary school enrollment rates between males and females, the expansion of education resulted in a notable increase in the number of girls attending secondary school. In the late 1960s, the government began to differentiate curricula for the growing number of female adolescents in school, with the objective of cultivating the norm of wise mothers and good wives. In high school dormitories designated as *saenghwalgwan*, female students received instruction not only in cooking, sewing, and traditional etiquette, but also in the management of a household.[41] Moreover, the state promoted sex education. This gendered educational system, along with the lessons about the future role of mothers and knowledge about the female body, influenced the ways in which women engaged with feminine technologies, as will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 5.

[40] Kong Jae-wook 공제욱, "'Honbunsik changnyŏundong'kwa siksaenghwarŭi pyŏnhwa '혼분식 장려운동'과 식생활의 변화 ('Mixed Grain and Flour Eating Campaign' and Dietary Changes)," in *Kukkawa ilssang 국가와 일상 (The State and Everyday Life)*, ed. by Kong Jae-wook 공제욱 (Paju: Hanurak'ademi, 2013), 141–89; Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 68–94.

[41] Kim Jeong-hwa 김정화, "Kyoyugŭl t'onghan sinsaimdang mandŭlgi 교육을 통한 신사임당 만들기 (Making *Sinsaimdang* through Education)," in *20segi yŏsŏng, chŏnt'onggwa kŭndaeŭi kyoch'aroe sŏda 20 세기 여성, 전통과 근대의 교차로에 서다 (Women in the Twentieth Century at the Junction of Tradition and Modern)*, ed. by Kuksap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Tusandonga, 2007), 161–71.

Establishment of a Private-Centered Healthcare System

The South Korean healthcare system was established between the 1950s and 1970s under the influence of the United States. In the context of the US military government and the Korean War, Korean physicians received training from American experts in South Korea and, on occasion, pursued further studies in the United States with the support of U.S. and international organizations. Subsequently, these physicians played a role in the establishment of a new healthcare system, one informed by their experiences and interactions with the United States. In the 1950s, a noteworthy event occurred in the public healthcare system. During the Korean War, the United Nations Civil Assistance Command in Korea (hereafter UNCACK) was organized, which collaborated with the Korean government to establish medical teams that provided medical aid and vaccinations. In 1951, the government initiated a transformation of the temporary wartime teams into public health dispensaries and subsequently public health centers, accompanied by the establishment of additional public health centers. In 1962, the government amended the Public Health Act, which stipulated that every city and county must have a health center as an exclusive administrative agency for preventive healthcare.[42]

In numerous national programs pertaining to the prevention of infectious diseases and family planning, the health centers served as nodes within networks, facilitating connections between the government, international and local organizations as well as individuals. With the assistance of foreign countries and international organizations, public health experts collected data on the bodies and illnesses of the Korean population and disseminated new artifacts such as contraceptive technology and preventive medicine through the health centers established throughout the country. It is noteworthy that the government networks were not exclusive, but sufficiently accessible to be penetrated by clinicians, pharmacists, and businesspeople, as will be illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5.

While the state organized the public health sector with an emphasis on preventive healthcare, it simultaneously promoted a private-centered and heterogeneous healthcare system that was influenced by the United States but distinct from the American one. In the aftermath of the liberation, prominent Korean physicians, whether leftists or not, advocated for the establishment of an equitable and accessible healthcare system for the general public. However, the influence of the United States and the lack of resources resulting from the Korean War led to the establishment of a private clinic-

[42] Lee Dong-won 이동원, "6·25chŏnjaenggwa han'guk pogŏnŭihakkye mit pogŏnhagŭi hyŏngsŏng 6·25 전쟁과 한국 보건의학계 및 보건학의 형성 (The Korean War and the Formation of Korean 'Public Health')," *Tongguksahak* 69 (2020): 339–74.

centered healthcare system in South Korea. The number of private clinics was recorded at 2,447 (83.5% of the total hospitals) in 1955 and reached 6,110 (95.3% of the total hospitals) in 1980.[43]

The lack of resources also led to the formation of a heterogeneous healthcare system. Since the colonial period, physicians trained in biomedicine had held the most prestigious positions within the medical license system, both legally and epistemologically within the scientific realm. However, they were not the sole group of legitimate practitioners. With the enactment of the Medical Service Law in 1951, the government approved traditional doctors, known as *hanŭisa* (Oriental doctors), as medical practitioners and began to issue them special licenses. Despite the opposition of physicians to the measure, the government anticipated that traditional doctors would be able to serve rural patients, as they had done since the colonial period, given that physicians were reluctant to work in such remote areas. It should be noted that the government did not view *hanŭisa* and *hanŭihak* (Oriental/traditional medicine) as equivalent to physicians and biomedicine. *Hanŭihak* has been subjected to criticism and evaluation by Western physicians and, on occasion, governments as unscientific. However, as medical historian Park Yun-jae notes, the governmental measures facilitated Koreans in "consuming *hanŭihak* as not alternative medicine but formal medicine."[44]

Pharmacists also constituted a significant segment of the medical personnel in South Korea's healthcare system. This was due, in part, to an increase in the number of graduates from pharmacy colleges. During the Korean War, the public began to view pharmacists as a profession with a distinct specialization. In response to perceived deficiencies in the healthcare system, the government approved an increase in the entrance quota of pharmacy colleges.[45] In a similar vein, the government postponed the enactment of a medical act that exclusively permits physicians to prescribe medication, thereby allowing pharmacists to dispense medication without a prescription.[46] These factors

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[43] Cho Byong-hee 조병희, *Han'guk ŭisaŭi wigiwa saengjon chŏllyak 한국 의사의 위기와 생존 전략 (Crisis and Survival Strategies of Korean Doctors)* (Myŏnggyŏng, 1994), 152.

[44] Park Yun-jae 박윤재, *Han'gukhyŏndaeŭiryosa 한국현대의료사 (The History of Medicine in Contemporary Korea)* (Tŭllyŏk, 2021), 56.

[45] Park Yun-jae, *The History of Medicine in Contemporary Korea*, 106.

[46] As the Separation of Drug Prescribing and Dispensing Law was acted in 2000, except for in the areas where people have difficulty in using medical facilities, pharmacists are not allowed to dispense without the prescription of physicians. Byeon Jin-ok 변진옥 and Cho Byong-hee 조병희, "Yakkugyaksadŭrŭi sahoejŏk yŏkhal silch'ŏne taehan kŭn'gŏironjŏk chŏpkŭn 약국약사들의 사회적 역할 실천에 대한 근거이론적 접근 (A Qualitative Study on the Practice of Community Pharmacists' Social Roles after the Separation of Drug Prescribing and Dispensing in Korea)," *Pogŏn'gwa sahoegwahak* 0.35 (2014): 107–44.

contributed to the ascendance of pharmacies as prominent medical providers in South Korea. A survey conducted in 1982 indicated that the majority of the Korean population relied on these providers. While 65.8% of all respondents indicated a preference for hospitals and clinics, 64.5% of all respondents utilized pharmacies primarily due to high medical fees.[47] This situation positioned pharmacies as primary care providers, responsible for diagnosing, prescribing, and providing medicine. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, pharmacists provided advice to people at the community level on matters related to contraception, menstruation, and vaginal discharges, as well as suggesting technological solutions to these concerns.

2.3. The Second Military Dictatorship and Consumer Society

In the late 1970s, despite the implementation of various measures by the Park government, the voices of the oppressed began to emerge, eventually leading to the collapse of the long-standing dictatorship. One such instance was the labor dispute and subsequent events involving employees of YH Trading Company. Since the late 1960s, workers had protested the harsh working conditions and low wages that the government had permitted in the name of national economic development, which reached a zenith in the late 1970s. In August 1979, YH Trading Company, which had derived profits from the export of inexpensive wigs, announced its intention to cease operations and terminate the employment of its workers. In response, the workers initiated a protest movement, demanding that the decision be reversed. The government employed brutal repression not only against the workers but also against other advocates, including the leader of the opposition party, journalists, professors, and religious organizations. In October of the same year, students and citizens assembled in the streets of two cities, Pusan and Masan, to express their discontent with the rising cost of property, the implementation of a value-added tax (VAT), and the prevailing sense of economic inequality. In response, the government declared martial law and arrested approximately 1,600 protesters, concluding the Pusan-Masan protest after a five-day period.[48] The series of protests indicated that the economic and political disaffection with the government had reached a critical point. In turn, the protests prompted people in other cities to apply pressure the government. Disagreements emerged between Park and his closest advisors regarding the best course of action to address the series of

[47] Park Yun-jae, *The History of Medicine in Contemporary Korea,* 111.

[48] Nam Jong-suk 남종석 and Won Dong-pil 원동필, "Pumaminjuhangjaenge issŏsŏ pusanjiyŏk kyŏngjejŏk paegyŏng 부마민주항쟁에 있어서 부산지역 경제적 배경 (Economic Backgrounds of Pusan-Masan Democratic Resistance in 1979: Focusing on Pusan)," *Sahoesasanggwa munhwa* 22.1 (2019): 173–202.

political, social, and economic challenges, which ultimately led to the assassination of his closest aide on October 26 of that year.[49]

The vacant position of the military dictator was subsequently filled by another faction within the military. In the aftermath of Park's assassination, Prime Minister Choi Kyu-ha assumed the role of acting president. However, his interim government was dissolved by a coup d'état led by Major General Chun Do-hwan and his associates in December 1979. People voiced their displeasure with the circumstances and took to the streets in protest. On May 17, 1980, Chun compelled the cabinet to proclaim martial law, citing the prevailing unrest as the rationale for this decision. The following day, masses in Kwangju Province assembled to express their opposition to imposition of the martial law. In order to suppress the protest, Chun deployed paratroopers, which resulted in the deaths of 162 individuals, including 37 people under the age of twenty. The brutal repression by Chun's group served to demonstrate its power.[50] In August 1980, Chun expelled opposition forces and became president through an indirect election under the *Yusin* Constitution. It was not until a series of countrywide labor movements and protests for democratization in 1987 that Chun stepped down.[51]

Chun's authoritarian government was constructed upon the foundations of its predecessor's institutions, thereby reinforcing the government-led system in a manner similar to that of its predecessor. However, the Chun administration was concerned that the domestic and international communities would question the government's legitimacy, which was founded upon a coup d'état, much like his predecessor. This resulted in the implementation of a variety of measures aimed at differentiating the government from its authoritarian predecessor, which influenced the lives of ordinary people. The sustained economic growth that South Korea has experienced since the 1960s has been a significant contributing factor in the emergence of a consumer society in South Korea. These transformations have been interwoven with the preexisting roles of women, education, and

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[49] Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History (Updated Edition)* (WW Norton & Company, 2005) *[Kindle E-Book]*, 372–81.

[50] The National Archive of Korea, "5.18 minjuhwaundong kŭnarŭi kiŏk kŭrigo kirok 5.18 민주화운동 그날의 기억 그리고 기록 (The Memories and Records of the Day)" <https://theme.archives.go.kr/next/518/paper4.do> [accessed, 3 October 2022].

[51] After Chun left office, another leader of the 1979 military coup and Chun's confidant, Roh Tae-woo, ran in the ensuing presidential election and won due to the conflict between two leading opposition candidates. It was not until non-military candidate Kim Young-sam was elected as president in 1992 that the era of leaders of the military clique ended. Lee Cheol-ho 이철호, "'6·29 sŏnŏn'ŭi hŏnjŏngsajŏk p'yŏngga "'6·29 선언'의 헌정사적 평가 (The Constitutional History Evaluation on 'June 29 Declaration')," *Han'gungmin'gan'gyŏngbihakhoebo* 20.4 (2021): 165–93.

healthcare systems, shaping women's bodily experiences in ways that diverged from those observed in the 1970s.

Ongoing Economic Growth and Lifting Regulation

Following a brief economic downturn around 1980, South Korea proceeded to experience sustained economic growth. From 1981 to 1990, the average annual growth rate of South Korea's gross national product (GNP) was 8.7%, which was higher than the 8.3% recorded in the 1970s.[52] The question of whether the rapid economic development resulted in a more equitable income distribution vis-a-vis the 1970s has been a subject of debate among scholars.[53] At a minimum, during the 1980s, a greater proportion of the population was engaged in the consumption of products that had previously been regarded as luxuries. As numerous scholars have observed, the transformation in everyday consumption patterns commenced in the 1970s and accelerated in the 1980s.[54] The records of ownership of major consumer products in 1980 and 1985 illuminate this shift. By 1980, 37.8% of households were recorded as owning refrigerators. After five years, this percentage increased to 71.1%. For telephone ownership, the rate was 24.1% in 1980 and 48.7% in 1985. Television ownership was already at 86.7% in 1980 and reached 99.1% in 1985, indicating that almost all households in the country owned a television set.[55]

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[52] Yoon Hong-sik 윤홍식, "Minjujuŭi ihaenggi han'guk pokchich'eje, 1980–1997: chubyŏnbu p'odŭjuŭi saengsanch'ejeŭi pokchich'eje 민주주의 이행기 한국 복지체제, 1980–1997: 주변부 포드주의 생산체제의 복지체제 (Korea Welfare Regime in Democracy Transition Period, 1980–1997)," *Han'guksahoebokchihak* 70.4 (2018): 37–68.

[53] Yi Jae-ok 이재옥, "1980nyŏndae sodŭkpunbae ch'uie taehan sangbandoen kyŏnhaeŭi p'yŏngga 1980 년대 소득분배 추이에 대한 상반된 견해의 평가 (A Review of Conflicting Evaluations on the Trajectory of Income Distribution in the 1980s)," *Han'gukkyŏngsangnonch'ong* 17.3 (2000): 89–108.

[54] Lee sang-rok 이상록, "1970nyŏndae sobiŏkchejŏngch'aekkwa sobimunhwaŭi ilsangjŏngch'ihak 1970 년대 소비억제정책과 소비문화의 일상정치학 (The Consumption Control Policy and the Politics of Everyday Life of Consumer Culture in the 1970s)," *Yŏksamunjeyŏn'gu* 29 (2013): 137–82; Laura C Nelson, *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* (Columbia University Press, 2000), 87.

[55] For the statistics on television ownership, see Nelson. *op. cit.,* 87. The extraordinary rate of television ownership in 1980 came from the Park government's policy rather than economic development. Park used television as a means to showcase national development and education, thus supporting industries related to the product. See Lim Jong-soo 임종수, "1960–70nyŏndae t'ellebijŏn pum hyŏnsanggwa t'ellebijŏn toibŭi maengnak 1960–70 년대 텔레비전 붐 현상과 텔레비전 도입의 맥락 (Television Boom and Context of Television Adoption in 1960s–70s)," *Han'gugŏllonhakpo* 48.2 (2004): 79–107; Cho Hang-je 조항제, "Han'gukpangsong ch'ogiŭi sijang: p'op'yullijŭmgwa TBC 한국방송 초기의 시장: 포퓰리즘과 TBC (Television and Market-populism in Korea: The Case of the TBC)," *Ŏllon'gwahagyŏn'gu* 12.3 (2012): 493–525.

At the same time, to differentiate itself from its predecessor, the Chun government lifted several regulations, particularly in preparing for two international sports events: the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympics. In 1982, the government lifted the curfew that had required people to stay in their homes from 10 PM to 4 AM since 1945.[56] It also liberalized the dress code in secondary schools that had regulated uniforms, hairstyles, and shoes since the 1930s.[57] In 1983, the government allowed people over fifty to travel abroad, which had been prohibited (with a few exceptions for younger people, such as business travelers and students studying overseas).[58] As I will examine in Chapters 3 and 5, such measures, along with economic development, contributed to changes in the consumption of adolescents and young women as well as their experiences with feminine technologies.

Establishment of The Ideal Housewives

Despite the fact that women were more highly educated than ever before, the proportion of women engaged in economic activities declined in the 1980s relative to the 1970s. From 1960 to 1975, the ratio increased from 26.8% to 45.7%. Nevertheless, the data indicate that the proportion was 38.4% in 1980, and 35.1% in 1985. This decline was the consequence of a structural transformation in the industrial sector, which was initiated and facilitated by the state. During the mid-1970s and 1980s, the Park and later Chun administrations fostered the growth of heavy chemical industries, which primarily employed skilled male workers. While these industries underwent expansion, light industry, which predominantly employed young women at low wages, experienced marginalization. Indeed, even women who expressed interest in entering the growing heavy industries encountered significant

[56] Kim Hak-sun 김학선, *24sigan Sidaeŭi t'ansaeng* 24 시간 시대의 탄생 (The Birth of the 24-Hour Era) (Paju: Changbi, 2020) [Aladin E-Book], Ch.3. para.4–13.

[57] Jeong Moo-yong 정무용, "1980nyŏndae chung·kodŭnghaksaeng 'kyobok chayurhwa' choch'iŭi sihaeng 1980 년대 중·고등학생 '교복 자율화' 조치의 시행 (Implementation of Measures for 'Autonomization [*sic*] of School Uniforms' for Middle and High School Students in the 1980s)," *Yŏksabip'yŏng* 135 (2021): 361–93; Park Hae-nam 박해남, "88 sŏurollimp'ikkwa sisŏnŭi sahoejŏngch'i 88 서울올림픽과 시선의 사회정치 (The 1988 Olympics in Seoul and the Social Politics of Eyes)," in *Han'guksaenghwalmunhwasa: 1980nyŏndae 한국현대 생활문화사: 1980 년대 (The History of Everyday Life and Culture in Modern Korea in the 1980s)* (Paju: Changbi, 2016), 123–50.

[58] Kim Jeong-mi 김정미, "Tŏ nŏlbŭn segyerŭl kyŏnghŏmhada: haeoeyŏhaeng chayuhwa 더 넓은 세계를 경험하다: 해외여행 자유화 (Experiencing the Broad World: Deregulation of Oversea Travel)," National Archives of Korea, <https://theme.archives.go.kr/next/koreaOfRecord/globalTravel.do.> [accessed, 1 October 2022]

barriers due to the exclusion of women from vocational training programs for such positions, including metal processing, electricity, transportation, and construction of equipment.[59]

The industrial change was accompanied by the establishment of the "normative gender division of labor" characterized by "husband-provider and dependent housewife." By the 1980s, even women in rural areas and poor families in urban areas who were engaged in economic activities outside of the home and contributed to their households considered themselves housewives.[60] In this sense, the role of women as housewives supporting their husbands at home, which the Park government attempted to inculcate, was solidified in the 1980s. Nevertheless, there were indications of a potential shift in the dynamics between married couples. A survey conducted in 1983 revealed that 81.6% of the respondents in their twenties espoused the view that the relationship between married couples is based on "affection between a couple" rather than on "a wife's obedience to a husband." This perspective was less prevalent among the older generation, yet even among individuals in their sixties, 59.8% of respondents concurred with this viewpoint.[61]

Upon initial observation, these modifications appear to be indicative of the concept of marriage as a union of romantic love, a tradition that is prevalent in Western industrialized societies, gaining ground in South Korea. It should be noted, however, that this norm was intertwined with the preexisting roles of women and the concept of family in South Korea. The traditional Confucian expectation that women as wives should bear sons to maintain paternal lineage remained a significant influence. The strong desire for education was another factor that shaped the role of married women in a manner that diverged from the Western norm. This aspiration, which originated from the enduring influence of Confucianism and the profound social and economic disruptions of the Korean War, was further intensified in the 1970s, in part, by the widening wage disparity between secondary school graduates and college graduates. This disparity emerged in conjunction with the expansion of trade, overseas construction, and heavy industry and became more pronounced in the 1980s, contributing to an increased desire for education.[62]

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[59] Moon*, Militarized Modernity*, 70–8.

[60] Moon, *Militarized Modernity*, 67.

[61] Chang Kyung-sup 장경섭, *Kajok·saengae·chŏngch'igyŏngje 가족·생애·정치경제 (Family, Lifetime, and Political Economy)* (Paju: Changbi, 2009), 77–8.

[62] Oh Je-yeon 오제연, "Kodŭnggyoyuk taejunghwawa hangnyŏk pulp'yŏngdŭng: ellit'ŭŭisikkwa hangnyŏkchuŭi munjerŭl chungsimŭro 고등교육 대중화와 학력 불평등: 엘리트의식과 학력주의 문제를 중심으로 (Higher Education Popularization and Inequality according to Educational Background: Focusing on the Issue of Elite Consciousness and Credentialism)," *Yŏksabip'yŏng* 140 (2022): 111–42.

In response to the growing demand for higher education and the resultant intense competition among students, the Chun administration unveiled the July 30th Education Reform, which involved the elimination of restrictions on university enrollment quotas and a prohibition on private tutoring.[63] The situation placed an additional burden on women who had embraced the ideal of the wise mother. While students were preoccupied with attending reputable universities during the 1970s, by the mid-1980s, mothers in the middle class were also experiencing similar levels of anxiety and stress due to the intense focus on educational excellence, as evidenced by newspaper reports on the phenomenon.[64] In response to the prohibition of private tutoring for students, some mothers opted to learn mathematics or English in order to teach their children themselves.[65] As will be examined in Chapters 4 and 5, the roles of women and subtle changes in the relationship between married couples have shaped women's technological choices regarding contraception, pregnancy, and sexuality.

Universal Medical Insurance System

The expansion of the National Health Insurance (hereafter NHI) in the 1980s constituted the most significant transformation in the healthcare system in South Korea. The NHI, which establishes public medical fee schedules and benefits, was introduced in 1977. The medical community expressed discontent with the fee schedule, as they considered the scheduled medical fees to be insufficient. The Korean Medical Association, an association of physicians, argued that the fee was no more than 55% of the typical rate.[66] Despite the objections raised by the medical community, Park's authoritarian government proceeded with the implementation of the scheme in collaboration with major companies that had already established independent medical coverage plans for their employees.[67] In

[63] Park Hwan-bo, "The Expansion of School Education after Liberation," 163.

[64] "Kominhanŭn chungnyŏn yŏsŏngdŭl:「chanyŏ sŭt'ŭresŭ」simgak 고민하는 中年 여성들: 「子女 스트레스」심각 (Afflicted Women in Middle Age: Severe Stress Associated with Children)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 18 October 1984.

[65] "'Adŭl ttal haksŭp naegajikchŏp tolbogetta': chubudŭl hagwŏn sugang pum '아들 딸 學習 내가 직접 돌보겠다': 주부들 學院 수강 붐 ('I Will Take Care of the Learning of My Children by Myself': A Boom of Taking Private Lessons among Housewives)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 22 December 1984.

[66] Ŭiryobohŏmyŏnhaphoe 의료보험연합회, *Ŭiryobohŏmŭi paljach'wi 醫療保險의 발자취 (The Trajectory of Medical Insurance)* (Seoul: Ŭiryobohŏmyŏnhaphoe, 1997), 105–6.

[67] Moon Min-ki 문민기 and Kim Seung-jo 김성조, "Pokchijŏngch'aege taehan chabonŭi ipchangŭi chŏngch'isahoehakchŏk kusŏng: 1977nyŏn ŭiryobohŏm silssi kwajŏngŭl chungsimŭro 복지정책에 대한 자본의 입장의 정치사회학적 구성: 1977 년 의료보험 실시 과정을 중심으로 (Political and Social Constructions of Business Interests in the Welfare Policy: A Case Study on the Launch of the Health Insurance in 1977)," *Miraejŏngch'iyŏn'gu*, 8.1 (2018): 117–41.

1977, the insurance was initially applied to only workers in companies with over 500 employees and their families, which constituted only 8.2% of the total population.

Ironically, with the introduction of the NHI, a significant proportion of the Korean population, comprising those who were self-employed or employed by small businesses (and their families), were subjected to significantly elevated fees. This was due to the fact that physicians attributed the reduction in their income prior to the implementation of the NHI to these uninsured patients. In response to the complaints regarding this discrepancy, the state gradually extended coverage to workers and their families in enterprises with 300 or more employees in 1979, 100 or more in 1981, 5 or more in 1988, and to the self-employed in rural areas in 1988. The incorporation of the urban self-employed in 1989 represented the culmination of the universal health insurance system a mere twelve years after its inception.[68] In 1987, the government expanded the NHI system to encompass *hanŭihak* (Oriental/traditional medicine).[69]

The expansion had a significant effect on the landscape of the South Korean healthcare system, which was previously dominated by for-profit hospitals and clinics. A detailed examination of the extent and magnitude of impact across all fields is beyond the scope of this dissertation. In at least one relevant field, obstetrics, the NHI has had an evident impact. The number of women giving birth in hospitals has increased, with the rate of institutional deliveries rising since the late 1970s. While the rate of institutional deliveries was 8.5% nationwide in 1974, nearly all women (98.8%) gave birth in medical facilities in 1991.[70]

Notwithstanding the increase in deliveries at hospitals, there was no corresponding rise in remuneration for physicians. Rather, clinicians were disinclined to perform deliveries because the scheduled fee for natural or vaginal delivery without specific medical interventions did not meet with

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[68] Park Yun-jae, *The History of Medicine in Contemporary Korea*, 138, 187.

[69] Kim Jeong-pil 김정필 and Lee Ki-nam 이기남, "Hanbangŭiryobohŏmŭi ŭiryosahoehakchŏk chŏpkŭne kwanhan yŏn'gu 한방의료보험의 의료사회학적 접근에 관한 연구 (A Study on the Social Medical Approach of Oriental Medical Insurance)," *Taehanyebanghanŭihakhoeji* 2.1 (1998): 113–44.

[70] For the record in 1974, Shin Jae-chul 신재철 et al., "Han'gugŭi punmanyangsange kwanhan koch'al(III): punmanjangso mit kŭ kaejojaŭi pyŏnch'ŏn 한국의 분만양상에 관한 고찰(III): 분만장소 및 그 개조자의 변천 (Changing Patterns of Childbirths in Korea(III))," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 32.5 (1989): 599–603; Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs 한국보건사회연구원, *Chŏn'guk ch'ulssallyŏk mit kajokpogŏn·pokchi silt'ae chosa* 전국 출산력 및 가족보건·복지 실태 조사 (A Survey on the National Fertility, Family Health and Welfare) (Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, 2000). As cited in Cho Young-Mi 조영미, "Han'gugŭi ch'ulssanŭi ŭiryohwa kwajŏng 한국의 출산의 의료화 과정(1960–2000) (The meidcaliztion of Childbirth in Korea (1960–2000))," *Yŏsŏnggŏn'gang* 7.1 (2006): 29–52.

their expectations. Consequently, instead of utilizing treatments covered by the NHI, such as vaginal delivery, physicians opted for procedures that patients were required to pay for privately, including abortions, Caesarean sections, and IVF treatments.[71] It should be noted that the rise in these treatments was not solely driven by physicians' demands but also reflected evolving desires and preferences among women, a topic that will be examined in Chapters 4 and 5.[72]

Historian Yong-wook Jung observes that while social and political changes have always influenced ordinary people's lives, the transition that occurred around 1945, when Korea was liberated from Japan, had a "direct bearing on individuals' lives."[73] Similarly, the preceding decades, during which South Korea experienced a series of political upheavals, including the Korean War and the establishment of two authoritarian governments, demonstrate the same phenomenon. The ramifications of these events on Korean society and women's lives were far-reaching although not always immediate.

The Korean War served to redefine the role of the family and the position of women within it. As a result of the war, the ensuing economic distress and political instability, the family unit became a primary means of survival. In the family, women who had previously been expected to fulfill the roles of wise mothers and good wives within the domestic sphere began to engage in economic activities. The roles of married women underwent a significant reorganization, with a notable shift in focus toward economic aspects, in the context of the evolving political and economic landscape during the war. In 1961, amidst the country's struggles in the aftermath of war, Park Chunghee and his cohort seized power in a military coup d'état, asserting that they were best positioned to address the most

[71] Park Jong-Heon 박종헌, "Han'guk saengsigŭiryoŭi chŏn'gaegwajŏnge kwanhan yŏn'gu : sogŭkchŏk chŏngch'aekpojojaesŏ sanŏpkaech'ŏkcharo 한국 생식의료의 전개과정에 관한 연구 : 소극적 정책보조자에서 산업개척자로 (A Study on the Development of Reproductive Medicine in Korea: From Passive Policy Assistant to Industrial Pioneer)" (doctoral thesis, Seoul National University, 2008), 105–14.

[72] As the low total fertility rate (the average number of children that a woman has over her childbearing years) became a social problem that threatened the national economy, the government decided to subsidize IVF treatment in 2006 and listed the treatment as one of the treatments covered by the NHI for married couples. For the relationship between population policy and IVF procedure in South Korea, see Jung-Ok Ha, "Solving Low Fertility Rate with Technology?" in *Gender, Health, and History in Modern East Asia, ed.by Angela Ki Che Leung and Izumi Nakayama* (Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 115–36.

[73] Chung Yong-wook 정용욱, *P'yŏnjiro ingnŭn haebanggwa chŏmnyŏng 편지로 읽는 해방과 점령 (Understanding Liberation and Occupation Through Letters)* (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 2021) [Aladin E-book], Ch3. para.6.

urgent issue of economic development. In the name of development, Park's military junta and his government from 1961 to 1979 intervened not only in the political and economic sectors but also in the everyday lives of people, including women. The government implemented national projects and radical measures that reshaped women's roles. Their roles were redefined as supporters of their husbands and assuming responsibility for reproduction, in alignment with the rapid industrialization process. Following Park's assassination, another authoritarian government was established. The government of the former general, Chun Doo-hwan, continued its predecessor's policies of state-led industrialization and repression of the political and labor movements as well as the FPP. These processes contributed to the consolidation of the roles of women in the family established in the 1960s and 1970s.

It is important to acknowledge the complex interrelationship between the sociopolitical changes surrounding women and the roles promoted by the state during the latter half of the twentieth century and the roles of women and the ideas about women's bodies that emerged during the Chosŏn Dynasty and Japanese colonial rule. In Confucianism, the primary duty of a daughter-in-law was to bear sons who would perpetuate the paternal line. Throughout the 1950s to 1980s, this Confucian responsibility, which had persisted and even intensified, became intertwined with a new perception of women's reproductive bodies and a desire for education. As a consequence of the intertwining of the preexisting and the new, Korean women's roles have been shaped in a manner similar to, yet distinct from, those observed in Western industrial societies and other East Asian societies, as will be investigated in detail in subsequent chapters.

This chapter offered an overview of the evolution of women's roles, education, and medical and healthcare systems in twentieth-century Korea from the perspective of intellectuals and the state, in accordance with the social and political changes in Korea. At first glance, Korean women may appear to be docile subjects who accepted the expectations of society or the government. The notable decline in the total fertility rate from 6.0 in 1960 to 2.06 in 1983, a mere two decades after the onset of the FPP in 1962, appears to provide compelling evidence.[74] However, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the ways in which women actively engaged with technologies in the landscape of feminine technologies challenge the recurring assumption that ordinary women were passive, docile

[74] In'gujŏngch'aek50nyŏnsap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe 인구정책 50 년사편찬위원회, *Han'guk in'gujŏngch'aek 50nyŏn: ch'ulssanŏkcheesŏ ch'ulssanjangnyŏro 한국 인구정책 50 년: 출산억제에서 출산장려로 (50years of Korean Population Policy: From Antinatalist [sic] To Pronatalist)* (Ministry of Health and Welfare, Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, 2016), 19–20.

instruments of the state. This does not imply that women's everyday lives were entirely independent of the roles of women ascribed to them by the state. The argument is that the role of women was not an exclusive tenet. Rather, it was one of the several references, including the material properties of technologies, their bodily conditions, desires, relationships with their husbands, and medical knowledge about the female body. In their everyday lives, Korean women appropriated the roles and policies of the state and used feminine technologies in ways that differed from those expected by the state or experts.

3. Natural Menstruation and Vulnerable Menstruating Bodies

*Every woman menstruates once a month, so she needs to know how to wash [menstrual pads]. Boiling of menstrual pads [*saengnidae*] is necessary to clean them, but in a rural area where it is difficult to use briquettes or an oil stove and thus to boil laundry frequently, boiling of menstrual pads alone is a challenge. In this case, if you soak the used menstrual pads in lukewarm water with some sodium carbonate (which you can buy at a pharmacy) for a while, [the blood] should come out.*

-A reader's letter, Women Donga, 1968[1]

I am a middle school student using Tempo [a brand of tampon], the insertion-style menstrual product. A few days ago, one of my friends said that misusing Tempo can damage the hymen. If the hymen is damaged, what happens? Could it hinder giving birth to a child in the future? Please give me a precise answer.

-A reader's letter, Female Students, 1985[2]

In 1968, a reader of the women's magazine *Women Donga* (*yŏsŏngdonga*) contributed her techniques for washing homemade menstrual pads with lukewarm water and sodium carbonate (also known as washing soda in the United States). The reader and the editors who deemed this technique worthy of being introduced to other readers demonstrate that for a considerable number of South Korean women, the reuse of homemade menstrual pads after washing them was a prevalent practice during that era. In 1985, in the teen magazine *Female Students* (*yŏhaksaeng*), another reader, who identified herself by her nickname "Yŏng" and as a tampon user, articulated her concerns regarding the disposable menstrual product. The two readers' letters, separated by less than two decades, indicate a more significant transition beyond the mere replacement of homemade menstrual pads with

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[1] Chŏn Yŏng-suk 전영숙, "Salimŭi hint'ŭ, naŭi saenghwal kyŏnghyŏmesŏ: saengnidaerŭl swipke ppallyŏmyŏn 살림의 힌트, 나의 생활 경험에서: 생리대를 쉽게 빨려면 (Household Knacks from My Experiences: An Easy Way for Washing Menstrual Pads)," *Women Donga*, June 1968, 404.

[2] "Osundosun sangdamshil 오순도순 상담실 (A Counseling Office)," *Female Students*, October 1985, 328.

disposable menstrual products. The reader in 1968 was concerned with ways to deal with her used cloth menstrual pads, whereas the young reader in 1985 was preoccupied with the potential impact of her use of the tampon on her hymen, as well as its effects on her future pregnancy and childbirth.

What were the underlying causes of such profound changes? What factors led Korean women to accept disposable menstrual products in lieu of homemade menstrual pads? Why did the young tampon user solicit the counsel of an anonymous expert regarding her intimate bodily experience in a public forum such as the teen magazine? To answer these questions, this chapter examines the evolution of the ways in which women engaged in menstrual technologies to manage their menstruation in South Korea from the 1960s to the 1980s, with a particular focus on the ways in which women chose, used, and modified these technologies.

While anthropologists have long examined the pervasiveness and universality of mensuration-related taboos in diverse societies beyond the West since the early twentieth century, in the late 1970s, scholars began to investigate the construction of these taboos within specific sociocultural contexts, with a particular emphasis on discourse analysis.[3] The book *The Curse* represents a seminal contribution to the cultural history of menstruation. In their book, Janice Delaney et al. examine the pervasiveness of the concept of pollution and uncleanness in the portrayal of menstruation in society, elucidating the construction of menstruation as a curse.[4] Similarly, in her classic *The Woman in the Body*, feminist anthropologist Emily Martin illustrates how menstruation, which was previously regarded as a healthy process, has been represented as a pathological phenomenon within Western medical discourses.[5] In a similar vein, some scholars have investigated how menstruation, particularly its negative implications, has been represented in advertisements and marketing strategies for menstrual products in the United States.[6]

Since the 2000s, studies of menstruation that focus on discourses in Western societies have undergone notable changes, which can be observed in two distinct ways. The first of these developments is the geographical expansion beyond the Global North. Some scholars have examined

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[3] Thomas Buckley and Alma Gottlieb, *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation* (Univ of California Press, 1988).

[4] Janice Delaney, et al., *The Curse: A Cultural History of Menstruation* (University of Illinois Press, 1976).

[5] Emily Martin, *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* (Beacon Press, 1987).

[6] Shelley M Park, "From Sanitation to Liberation? The Modern and Postmodern Marketing of Menstrual Products," *Journal of Popular Culture* 30.2 (1996): 149–68; Elizabeth Arveda Kissling, *Capitalizing on the Curse: The Business of Menstruation* (Lynne Rienner Publishers Boulder, 2006); Camilla Mørk Røstvik, "Tampon Technology in Britain: Unilever's Project Hyacinth and the '7-Day War' Campaign, 1968–1980," *Technology and Culture* 63.1 (2022): 61–86.; Camilla Mørk Røstvik, *Cash Flow: The Businesses of Menstruation* (UCL Press, 2022).

the topic of menstruation in East Asia, during which the twentieth century during which the Western/biomedical discourse on menstruation was introduced to the region as part of what was considered to be civilized and progressive knowledge. By accepting the premise that the meaning of menstruation is socially constructed, these scholars have shed light on the ways in which the Western "scientific" perspective of menstruation was intertwined with local contexts in colonial Korea, the People's Republic of China, and postcolonial Taiwan.

In her work on the medical discourse surrounding menstruation in colonial Korea, Kim Mi-hyun argues that Korean physicians introduced and disseminated a pathological perspective on menstruation that was imported from Japan.[7] Lin Shing-ting examines the discourse on menstruation as part of discourses on female hygiene in Republican China during the 1910s–1930s, in which "Western sanitary science" and Chinese medicine were inextricably intertwined.[8] Wang Hsiu-Yun investigates menstrual knowledge in the context of menstrual education in postcolonial Taiwan, and how the knowledge that originated from Japan and the United States was shaped differently in a postcolonial context.[9]

In the 2010s, a number of scholars initiated research into menstruation in the Global South, with a focus on the challenges faced by women and adolescents during menstruation. Since the United Nations launched global initiatives to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and included menstrual hygiene management (hereafter MHM) as a component of WASH in the early 2000s, scholars have explored factors that contribute to poor MHM in the Global South.[10] In addition to sociocultural factors such as stigma or fear of menstruation, researchers have examined the role of technologies, such as menstrual products, water supply systems, and soap, involved in MHM as potential avenues for improving WASH. Such approaches, according to Chris Bobel, tend to oversimplify the challenges of menstruation in the Global South as a problem that can be solved

[7] Kim Mi-hyun 김미현, "Putkŭrŏhamyŏn k'ŭn pyŏngi saenggimnida 붓그러하면 큰 병이 생깁니다 (Feeling Embarrassed would Cause Severe Diseases)," in *20segi yŏsŏng, chŏnt'onggwa kŭndaeŭi kyoch'aroe sŏda 20 세기 여성, 전통과 근대의 교차로에 서다 (Women in the Twentieth Century at the Junction of Tradition and Modern*), ed. by Kuksap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Tusandonga, 2007), 252–95.

[8] Shing-ting Lin, "'Scientific' Menstruation: The Popularisation and Commodification of Female Hygiene in Republican China, 1910s–1930s," *Gender & History* 25.2 (2013): 294–316.

[9] Hsiu-Yun Wang, "Postcolonial Knowledge from Empires: The Beginnings of Menstrual Education in Taiwan, 1950s–1980s," *East Asian Science, Technology and Society* 11.4 (2017): 519–40.

[10] Jacqueline Gaybor and Wendy Harcourt, "Seeing the Colour Red: Menstruation in Global Body Politics," *Global Public Health 17:10 (2022): 2388–2400.*

through technological fixes such as improving infrastructure and providing menstrual products.[11] However, recent studies of menstruation in the Global South have recognized the complexity of politics in women's menstrual experiences, focusing not only on technical aspects but also on the sociocultural aspects that influence menstrual health.[12]

The second change in menstruation studies is the growing interest in the technology associated with menstruation. This perspective differs from the one that views technology as a solution to the issues associated with menstruation, as it situates technology at the core of the analysis. Since the 2000s, some scholars have examined menstrual technology as an interface between menstrual discourse, women's ideas and experiences. In doing so, they have illuminated the ways in which women have been involved with menstrual technology through interactions between multiple actors, each with their own agendas, including women themselves.

Sara Vostral's *Under Wraps* represents a pioneering study of menstrual technology and its female users. She examines the evolution of discourses on menstruation, menstrual products, and women's positions, employing the concept of passing, which refers to the process of moving between different social identities. She illustrates that concerns about the menstruating body have increased since the nineteenth century, in line with the growth of women's participation in activities outside the domestic sphere and the transformations in the labor market due to WWII. As a result of these shifts, women came to accept sanitary pads and tampons because these technologies could "fix" their problematic bodies by helping them conceal their menstruation. With this technology, they were able to pass from a "bleeding body" to a "healthy body" or to being a "non-bleeder."[13]

In a similar vein, Lara Freidenfelds' study of the evolution of the attitudes toward and practices related to menstruation in the United States during the twentieth century places particular emphasis on menstrual technology. In her book *The Modern Period,* she illustrates that menstruation has undergone the transformation from a subject that should be hidden and that restricts certain activities, such as swimming or exercising, to a normal phenomenon that no longer impinges upon such activities.

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[11] Chris Bobel, *Managed Body: Developing Girls and Menstrual Health in the Global South* (Springer, 2019).

[12] Thérèse Mahon and Maria Fernandes, "Menstrual Hygiene in South Asia: A Neglected Issue for WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Programmes," *Gender & Development* 18.1 (2010): 99–113; Rajanbir Kaur et al., "Menstrual Hygiene, Management, and Waste Disposal: Practices and Challenges Faced by Girls/Women of Developing Countries," *Journal of Environmental and Public Health,* (2018); Alexandra K Shannon et al., "How Do Women and Girls Experience Menstrual Health Interventions in Low-and Middle-Income Countries? Insights from a Systematic Review and Qualitative Metasynthesis," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 23.5 (2021): 624–43.

[13] Sharra Louise Vostral, *Under wraps: A History of Menstrual Hygiene Technology* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008).

This shift, which she terms the "modern period," has been shaped by the actions of menstrual product manufacturers, who have engaged with experts in the fields of health and education, as well as ordinary people.[14]

In her work, Tanaka Hikaru elucidates the role of menstrual products in the transformation of ordinary women's perceptions of menstruation in modern Japan. In *A Social History of Menstrual Products*, she traces the evolution of menstrual products and their influences. Despite the fact that Japanese physicians trained in biomedicine produced medical discourse on menstruation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women had hardly spoken aloud about menstruation. In the 1960s, the development of a disposable menstrual pad, later named the Anne Napkin (アンネナプキン), by female inventor Sakai Yoshiko (坂井泰子) and its subsequent marketing strategy by the manufacturer altered the way women viewed menstruation in everyday life. Their efforts led to the product's popularity and further enabled Japanese women to discuss menstruation by its name in public, thereby dismantling the menstrual taboo.[15]

This emphasis on menstrual technology has been largely overlooked by Korean scholars. Nevertheless, there are a few exceptions. In her study of the menstrual experiences of women who were born in the first half of the twentieth century and lived in a village, ethnographer Baek Min-jeung attends not only to their memories and emotions but also to the menstrual technologies that they used, including homemade and disposable menstrual pads.[16] Similarly, feminist scholar Noah Ji-eun considers disposable menstrual products an important aspect of understanding how women in modern South Korea experienced menstruation and how the ideas about menstruation and women were represented in product advertisements during the 1960s–1980s.[17] However, from Baek's and

[14] Lara Freidenfelds, *The Modern Period: Menstruation in Twentieth-Century America* (JHU Press, 2009).

[15] Tanaka Hikaru 田中 ひかる, *Saengniyongp'umŭi sahoesa 생리용품의 사회사 (A Social History of Menstrual Products)*, trans. by Ryu Young-jin 류영진 (Homilbooks Publishing CO., 2019).

[16] Baek Min-jeung 백민정, "Wŏlgyŏnggyŏhŏmŭl t'onhae bon yŏsŏng chŏngch'esŏngŭi hyŏngsŏnggwa pyŏnhwa: Andongsi p'ungsanŭp sosanmaŭrŭl chungsimŭro 월경경험을 통해 본 여성 정체성의 형성과 변화: 안동시 풍산읍 소산마을을 중심으로 (Creation and Changes of Women's Identity According to Menstruation Experiences-Focusing on Sosan Villiage in Punsan-eup Andong-si-)" (master's thesis, Andong National University, 2012).

[17] Noah Ji-eun 노지은, "Wŏlgyŏng kyŏnghŏmgwa munhwajŏng kŭmgie kwanhan yŏn'gu 월경 경험과 문화적 금기에 관한 연구 (A Study of the Experiences of Menstruation and the Cultural Taboos)" (master's thesis, Ewha Womans University, 1995); Noah Ji-eun 노지은, "1970nyŏndae–1990nyŏndae saengnidae kwanggo tamnon'gwa yŏsŏng 1970 년대–1990 년대 생리대 광고 담론과 여성 (1970s–1990s Menstrual Product Advertisements and Gender in Korea)," *Yŏsŏnggwa yŏksa*,21 (2014): 219–49.

Noah's perspectives, the methods by which women created and used menstrual technology, as well as the representations of said technology, can be seen as outcomes or reflections of the cultural taboo surrounding menstruation. Consequently, they overlook the role of menstrual technology in shaping the idea of menstruation as well as the role of the women who participated in the process as users of the technology.

In contrast to Baek and Noah, I have previously situated menstrual technology at the center of my analysis of the transition in menstrual technology and South Korean women's perception of menstruation from the 1960s to 1980s. In the narrative, menstruation was transformed from something that should be concealed to a normal but special biological event that requires care. The idea was initially derived from menstrual knowledge produced by health and education experts. However, it was not solely disseminated by them. Disposable menstrual product manufacturers dispelled menstrual taboos by publicizing their products, and female users made the products necessary by embracing products based on their consideration of their conditions and interpretation of menstrual knowledge.[18]

This chapter builds upon existing approaches to menstrual technology while also exploring the ways in which South Korean women were actively involved with menstrual technology as users. As previously stated in the introduction to this dissertation, technology related to female bodies, or what I refer to as "feminine technology," requires the involvement of women due to the discrepancy between the majority of mass-manufactured technology and individual female bodies. In the case of menstrual technology, the discrepancy primarily stems from the fact that each woman's menstrual cycle and the amount of menstrual blood she experiences vary considerably. Additionally, women's bodies exhibit a wide range of shapes and sizes. This necessitates that each woman to consider whether a manufactured, uniform menstrual product fits her individual, fluid body. This situation would prompt each female user to consider whether the menstrual pad effectively absorb her menstrual blood and whether it cause irritation to her skin. In the event that she finds that the technology does not fit her body, she may either modify it or reject it and pursue alternatives. This chapter elucidates the subtle interactions between a woman and a specific menstrual technology,

[18] This chapter is primarily based on the author's master's thesis and the interviews with thirteen women conducted for that thesis. However, it also includes additional interviews from 2021 and other new materials. Lee Young-ju 이영주, "Irhoeyong saengnidaeŭi toipkwa wŏlgyŏnghanŭn mome taehan insigŭi pyŏnhwa 일회용 생리대의 도입과 월경하는 몸에 대한 인식의 변화 (The Introduction of Disposable Menstrual Products and the Change of Perception about the Menstrual Body: In 1960s–1980s Korea)" (master's thesis, Seoul National University, 2018).

illustrating how women users exercised creativity at the level of their everyday lives in using feminine technology.

This chapter employs the concept of affordance of technology and its mechanisms to describe the diverse and subtle engagements of female users and menstrual technologies. The mechanisms of *request*, *demand*, *refuse*, *encourage*, *discourage*, and *allow* help us to capture the nuanced interaction between users and feminine technology. This includes an examination of how a woman selected a specific menstrual technology that allowed certain actions, specifically in terms of how a woman became a specific menstrual technology's user. It also considers the demands and requests placed on the user by the technology and how the user responded to such demands and requests in creative ways that differed from what was expected by the state, sex education experts, physicians, and manufacturers. In this manner, the involvement of users with the technology that allows certain actions encourages or discourages such actions. It should also be noted that the range of actions was always constrained by the material and sociocultural context in which the user was situated. In the case of the menstrual technology, these contexts included the preexisting idea of menstruation, the expansion of education, the advent of sex education, which disseminated medical knowledge about menstruation, and the rapid economic development.

This chapter is divided into three sections, presented in chronological order, although the periods in question overlap somewhat. The initial section of the chapter examines ways in which Korean women made their homemade pads and (re)used them by the mid-1970s. The practice was largely shaped by the prevailing idea that menstruation is something that should be concealed. The second section investigates how an increasing number of Koreans accepted disposable menstrual pads and their ways of using this new technology between the late 1960s and the late 1970s. While the state and education experts endeavored to instill a novel concept of menstruation, their efforts as well as women's practices remained influenced by the traditional idea of menstruation. The third section considers how women used and rejected disposable menstrual products, which became a daily necessity, and sought alternatives in the context of the evolving concept of menstruation and menstruating bodies since the late 1970s.

To comprehend the context surrounding menstrual technology in Korea, it is essential to recognize that a multitude of terms pertaining to menstruation and menstrual technology in Korean have been used in a manner distinct from their English counterparts. The term used to describe menstruation in South Korea has varied over time. *Wŏlgyŏng* (月經) is a formal term that can be translated into "menstruation" in English. Occasionally, the term *mensŭ* was employed as an abbreviation and euphemism for menstruation. *Saengni* (生理), which translates to "physiology," was frequently employed as a euphemism for menstruation but eventually became synonymous with it by the 1980s.

In this context, devices designed to absorb menstrual blood are referred to as *saengnidae* (生理帶), which translates to a band for menstruation or menstrual pad. Consequently, the Korean term '*chaeraesik saengnidae' refers to* traditional homemade cloth pads, while the term *'kani* (temporary) *saegnidae,' which was primarily used in the 1960s and 1970s, and* '*irhoeyong* (disposable) *saegnidae' refers* to sanitary pads/napkins. Tampons were frequently referred to as '*sabiphyŏng* (insertion-style) *saegnidae.'* In general, I translate *saengni* as "period" and *wŏlgyŏng* as "menstruation" in order to maintain the contexts in which the word was used and the shifts surrounding the bodily experience.

3.1. Dealing with Bleeding Bodies

Every Woman's Own Cloth Pads

In colonial Korea, most Korean women used homemade cloth pads. At that time, in the Republic of China, the Kotex sanitary napkin, the inaugural manufactured disposable menstrual pad, was promoted. In Japan, a series of fasteners designed to hold cotton for the purpose of absorbing menstrual blood, such as the "Victoria Menstrual Belt (ビクトリヤ 月經帶)" was advertised. While those of higher socioeconomic status purchased such products, most Japanese women used paper or cotton inserted into the vagina.[19] However, most Korean women, regardless of socioeconomic status, used homemade menstrual pads, primarily composed of cotton. Park Hyŏn-sun (born in 1923) recalled that she used homemade menstrual pads. Despite her status as the daughter of one of "the richest families" in Jinju Province and her advanced education, which included graduation from a vocational school (the highest level of education available to female Koreans during the colonial period), she used cotton cloth pads made by her mother.[20] The situation remained unchanged following the liberation from Japan in 1945. In 1955, an obstetrician recommended ironing homemade cloth pads for "disinfection."[21] By the late 1960s, most women continued to use cloth menstrual pads, as evidenced

[19] Lin, "Scientific Menstruation," 295; ビクトリヤ 月經帶, 大和護謨製作所, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 27 May 1923; Tanaka, *A Social History of Menstrual Products*, 16.

[20] Chun Kyung-ock 전경옥 et al., *Han'gukyŏsŏnginmulssa1: han'gugyŏsŏnggŭn-hyŏndaesa1. Han'gaehwagi–1945 한국여성인물사 1: 한국여성근현대사 1. 한개화기–1945 년 (A History of Korean Women: Women's History in Modern and Contemporary Korea1. From the Late Nineteenth Century to 1945)* (Sookmyung Women's University Press, 2004), 242–6.

[21] Kim Jae-hong 김재홍, "Wŏlgyŏng pulsunŭ momjori 月經不順의 몸조리 (Caring for Menstrual Irregularity), " *Yŏwŏn* 1955, 92–3. As cited in Lee Hwa-hyung 이화형 et al., *Han'gukhyŏndaeyŏsŏngŭi ilssangmunhwa8. kajŏngwisaeng 한국현대여성의 일상문화 8. 가정위생 (Korean Modern Women's Culture of Everyday Life 8. Hygiene at Home)* (Kukhakcharyowŏn, 2005), 249–51.

by the reader's aforementioned tips for washing homemade menstrual pads. The homemade menstrual pads were known by a number of different names. Some women referred to them as *dalgeuripo*, which translates to "fabric for menstruation." In certain regions, women referred to them as *gaejim*, *gajimi*, or *seudap*, which were dialectal variations of the word for laundry. However, most women simply referred to handmade cloth pads as "the thing [*kŭgŏ*]."[22]

These homemade menstrual pads requested women to develop their own techniques to make the pads fit their bodies depending on the availability of suitable materials. Women made the pads from assorted fabrics, including cotton and hemp, which they commonly used for making clothing. Some women used recycled cotton diapers and worn-out clothes to create their menstrual pads.[23] In certain instances, even within the same family, women used different materials for cloth pads, reflecting generational variations. Song Yŏng-ja, who experienced her menarche around 1970, recalled that her grandmother used hemp menstrual pads, whereas the grandmother used cotton to make Yŏng-ja's menstrual pads.[24]

Women devised a variety of methods for their menstrual pads to fit their bodies. Some women folded the material into a flat square configuration, while others created a more asymmetrical shape, with the anterior portion of the pad being thicker than the posterior. Others stuffed cotton wool or pieces of cloth into the cloth pads, thereby enhancing their absorptive capacity. The subsequent step was to incorporate a component that would secure the cloth pad in position against the body or undergarment. Some women attached string, rubber bands, or button hooks to the pads. Some women made their cloth pads longer and fastened them to their bodies by tying a cylindrical rubber band around their waists and tucking the pads underneath to secure them to the body, as mothers "cinch a baby's diaper around the waist." However, it should be noted that not all women made cloth menstrual pads. In the 1960s, a woman nicknamed Ohyŏn-daek used multiple sheets of gauze simultaneously to absorb her menstrual blood.[25] Once the gauze on top was saturated with blood, she

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[22] Cho hŭi-jin 조희진, *Sŏnbiwa p'iŏssing 선비와 피어싱 (A Chosŏn Scholar and Piercing)* (Dongasia, 2003), 15–6; Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences," 54.

[23] Chun Kyung-ock et al., *A History of Korean Women* 1, 256; Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences," 38.

[24] Song Yŏng-ja, interviewed by the author, 2018.

[25] The Korean word *daek* is a suffix that indicates where a married woman comes from, such as her birthplace or the region she lives in, which has been commonly used as an informal nickname to call married women. For example, Ohyŏn-daek means a "married woman from the Ohyŏn region."

would remove it. Instead of discarding it, she washed and reused it, as other users of cloth menstrual pads did.[26]

Dealing with Unexpected Blood

The diverse homemade menstrual pads demanded actions that modern disposable menstrual pads do not, namely washing them. For most Korean women, menstruation was something that was to be concealed. The technology in Korea requested actions that conventional fabric did not. It is important to note that this idea was distinct from the ritual or institutionalized menstrual taboo exemplified by menstrual huts, small structures designed to segregate menstruating women in regions such as Nepal and certain areas of Japan, as well as the medical discourse on menstruation.[27] During the colonial period, as in China and Japan, Korean physicians produced medical discourses on menstruation that explained it as a physiological phenomenon and disseminated them through newspapers and magazines. In particular, like Japanese physicians, they focused on the pathology of menstruation. They regarded normal menstruation as a potential cause of criminal behavior, mental illness, or poor work performance. Other physicians were interested in pathological conditions such as amenorrhea and dysmenorrhea. Consequently, they emphasized scientific menstrual management as a means of addressing these issues.[28]

Nevertheless, the impact of such medical discourse on ordinary women was insignificant. In 1942, only 29 percent of the population eligible for elementary school attended school, resulting in a significant illiteracy rate among women.[29] In 1950, elementary education became compulsory, and by 1960, 70% of South Korea's total population was literate.[30] Consequently, the majority of illiterate

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[26] Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences," 38, 58; Kim Bo-ram 김보람, *P'iŭ yŏdaegi 피의 연대기 (For Vagina's Sake)*, film (KT&G sangsangmadang, 2017); Song Yŏng-ja, interview; Pak Jŏng-suk, interviewed by the author, 2018; Kim Kang-ja, interviewed by the author, 2018.

[27] Tanaka, *A Social History of Menstrual Products*, 72–8.

[28] Tanaka, *A Social History of Menstrual Products*, 19; Kim Mi-hyun, "Feeling Embarrassed would Cause Severe Diseases," 271; Han Min-ju 한민주, *Haebudae wiŭi yŏjadŭl 해부대 위의 여자들 (Women on Dissecting Tables)* (Sogang University Press, 2017), 227–8.

[29] Kim Su-jin 김수진, "1920–30nyŏndae shinyŏsŏngdamnon'gwa sangjingŭi kusŏng 1920–30 년대 신여성담론과 상징의 구성 (Excess of the Modern: Three Archetypes of the New Woman and Colonial Identity in Korea, 1920s to 1930s)" (doctoral thesis, Seoul National University, 2005), 98.

[30] Kim Yŏng-hwa 김영화, "Han'gugŭi kyoyukkwa kyŏngjesŏngjang 한국의 교육과 경제성장 (Education and Economic Development in South Korea)," in *Taehanmin'guk kyoyuk 70nyŏn 대한민국 교육 70 년 (Education in Republic of Korea for Seventy Years)*, ed. by Oh Sung-chul (Seoul: National Museum of Korean Contemporary History, 2015), 231.

women acquired knowledge about menstruation not from written sources but through their own menarche. Baek Min-jeung's interviewees, who experienced their menarche in the 1930s, and my own interviewees, who experienced their menarches in the 1960s and 1970s, lacked any knowledge of menstruation at the time of their first menstruation. When a woman nicknamed Bonghwa-daek reached her menarche, she washed the menstrual blood, which she regarded "just blood." When another woman nicknamed Daesan-daek discovered a "sticky red one" on her "lower part," she initially believed that her buttocks were injured.[31] After experiencing sudden, unfamiliar bleeding, they sought assistance from their mothers, sisters-in-law, or grandmothers.[32]

The women acquired knowledge about menstruation, how to create cloth pads, and how to handle them from these elder women. This practical yet partial understanding diverged from the so-called modern or "scientific" knowledge of menstruation as a marker of female reproductive capability. It was not until their menstruation ceased during pregnancy that some women were able to discern the relationship between menstruation and pregnancy. A woman nicknamed Daesan-daek acquired this knowledge when she visited a hospital due to her concern regarding the absence of menstruation one year after her marriage.[33] Once they learned about the presence of menstruation, its connection with menarche, and ways to make their own menstrual pads from their mothers or sisters-in-law, most women rarely discussed menstruation with others. It was only when menstrual blood stained their clothes that female family members would broach the topic of menstruation, typically in a reprimanding tone due to the perceived carelessness.[34] While Korea lacked menstrual huts, this reticence in everyday life led most Korean women to regard menstruation as something that should be concealed.

Under the influence of the idea of menstruation as something to be concealed, menstrual pads demanded a series of actions from South Korean women, thereby reinforcing the idea. These actions entailed not only the removal of the menstrual blood from pads but also the concealment of the technology that implied or manifested their menstruation. The material conditions of South Korea's infrastructure presented additional challenges to the fulfillment of these demands. By the 1980s, the water supply system was unable to meet the needs of the entire population. In 1960, only 17% of the

[31] Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences," 32–3; Song Yŏng-ja, interview; Kim Kang-Ja, interview; An Min-Ja, interviewed by the author, 2018.

[32] Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences," 19–30; Song Yŏng-ja, interview; Kim Kang-Ja, Interview.

[33] Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences," 28.

[34] Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences," 42.

population had access to running water and in 1970, that figure remained low at 33%.[35] As a result, it was common for most households to store their laundry at home and wash it at streams or communal washing places in rural areas. Women stored their used homemade pads out of sight for several days until they were ready to wash them with other dirty clothes. Otherwise, they washed them at night when they could do so with privacy. As traditional methods of laundering garments, such as using lye, proved ineffective for removing menstrual blood, women devised alternative techniques to accomplish this task. One such method was washing the used pads after roughly washing them with running water. Some women soaked the pads in urine or sodium carbonate dissolved in lukewarm water. Some women boiled the cloth pads alone if they could afford to heat the extra water, or boiled them with other clothes if they could not.

The demands of menstrual cloth pads extended beyond the removal of menstrual blood. Women used to dry the pads in secluded places and collect them early in the morning, taking care to avoid exposure even to their families.[36] Some women who did not use homemade menstrual pads were not subjected to such demands. One woman nicknamed Maesan-daek lacked the financial resources to procure even cloth diapers for her five children. She therefore used torn garments to absorb menstrual blood, discarding the rags once they had absorbed the blood. The rags could be perceived as a convenient menstrual technology, as they did not demand a series of washing and drying actions. However, at that time, for her, the rags merely signified her poverty.[37]

Disposable Menstrual Pads for "Travel and Wedding"

In 1966, a disposable menstrual pad named "Clean Pad (k'ŭrinp'aedŭ)" was publicized in the daily newspaper *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* as "very popular in the United States and several European countries."[38] In the same year, the manufacturer of the Clean Pad, Mugunghwa Paper Manufacturing, disseminated a series of advertisements for the product in other newspapers. In one such

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[35] Ministry of the Construction 건설부, *Sangsudo 상수도 (Water Supply)*, 1985. As cited in Hong Young-sik 홍영식 et al., "Sangsudo chŏngch'aek mokp'yoŭi pyŏndonggwa sŏnggwae taehan yŏksajŏk p'yŏngga yŏn'gu 상수도 정책 목표의 변동과 성과에 대한 역사적 평가 연구 (A Study on Transition of Waterer Supply Policy Objectives and Their Performance)," *Han'gukchibanggonggiŏphakhoebo* 14.2 (2018), 39.

[36] Cho hŭi-jin, *Sŏnbiwa p'iŏssing*, 22; Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences", 35, 42, 58–60; Kim Bo-ram*, For Vagina's Sake*; An Mi-Suk, interviewed by the author, 2018; Kim Yŏng-suk, interviewed by the author, 2021; Sŏ Jŏng-sun, interviewed by the author, 2021; Song Yŏng-ja; Kim Kang-ja, interview.

[37] Baek Min-jeung, "Menstruation Experiences," 40.

[38] K'ŭrinp'aedŭ, Mugunghwa Paper Manufacturing, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 5 April 1966.

advertisement in 1967 in *Women Donga* magazine, the company included a cautionary note at the top of the page: "Beware of imitations."[39] In an official document from 1968, the Economic Planning Board (*kyŏngjegihoegwŏn*) indicated that the Mugunghwa Company, the Changmi Company, and other small enterprises collectively produced 8,300 GGs of menstrual pads.[40] In 1970, Seoul Paper Manufacturing released an advertisement for its Anemone Napkin in *Women Donga*, wherein it was promoted as a "mascot of modern women."[41] In the following year, Yuhan Kimberly, a joint venture of the Korean pharmaceutical company Yuhan Yanghaeng and Kimberly-Clark, the manufacturer of Kotex, released advertisements for its disposable menstrual pads, Kotex Freedom.[42] This series of sources indicates that some Korean companies have been manufacturing disposable menstrual pads since the mid-1960s.

The advent of disposable menstrual pads did not result in an immediate replacement of homemade menstrual pads. Indeed, the manufacturers had not foreseen such a rapid uptake. The majority of advertisements for disposable menstrual pads positioned the products as ideal for use on special occasions rather than as a daily product, highlighting their portability, which allows users to replace them outside of the home. Advertisements for the Clean Pad emphasized the product's suitability for "dates," during "travel," and at "weddings."[43] While the Anemone Napkin advertisement did not make reference to travel, it echoed the Clean Pad advertisement in emphasizing the product's portability, stating, "You can easily use them anytime, anywhere."[44]

A review of sales data for disposable pads between 1971 and 1972 indicates that women were initially reluctant to adopt disposable menstrual pads. The total average monthly sales of Clean Pad and Kotex products in 1971 were 100,000 units. While their sales increased fivefold the following year, this figure represented a mere fraction of the number of potential consumers, with a population of six million women aged 15–44 in 1970. Disposable menstrual pads were referred to as a "substitute" for

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[39] K'ŭrinp'aedŭ, Mugunghwa Paper Manufacturing, advertisement, *Women Donga*, November and December (bound volume) 1967.

[40] GG, the abbreviation of great gross, means 1,728 pieces." Ministry of the Economic Planning Board, "Approval of Foreign Investment and Technology Transfer Agreement for the Manufacture of Various Hygienic Paper Products (Yuhan Yanghaeng Limited and Kimberly-Clark Corp in the U.S.), 1969, National Archives of Korea, Reference No.BA0139012.

[41] Anemone Napkin, Seoul Paper Manufacturing, advertisement, *Women Donga*, January 1970.

[42] Kotex, Yuhan Kimberly, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 27 January 1971.

[43] K'ŭrinp'aedŭ, Mugunghwa Paper Manufacturing, advertisement, *Women Donga*, November and December (bound volume) 1967.

[44] Anemone Napkin, Seoul Paper Manufacturing, advertisement, *Women Donga*, January 1970.

homemade cloth menstrual pads.[45] An advertisement for Kotex from 1973 is noteworthy for its insight into the context surrounding the emergence of new disposable menstrual products at that time. The advertisement featured a housewife, her face in shadow, washing an unidentified item (the photograph cuts off at her wrists, so the item being washed is not visible). The advertisement posed the question: why were audiences still using "traditional menstrual pads"?

> *The traditional menstrual pads [*saengnidae*] that you have to wash without your family knowing and the annoying laundry that you can't delegate to anyone else! Why haven't you thrown them away? Here's Kotex, which requires no washing and is easy to use. Not sure about Kotex? Since Kotex has a specially designed safe plastic protector, you need not to feel anxious. Please test the convenience and reliability of Kotex with samples we'll send you.*[46]

The references to "reliability" and "protector" suggest that many women were uncertain about the ability of the new products to effectively absorb menstrual blood, thereby concealing their menstruating bodies.

In the early 1970s, the opinions of medical and educational experts were in alignment with the suspicions that women had about the quality of disposable menstrual pads. In 1970, Kang Ji-yong, a female physician and a lecturer in the Department of Preventive Medicine at Ewha Womans University, evaluated homemade menstrual pads and disposable pads in an article published in *Women Donga*. Kang asserted that while traditional menstrual pads are "100% reliable," disposable "menstrual pads currently on the market" frequently prove ineffective in preventing menstrual blood from leaking. Consequently, she advised that disposable pads which are "convenient for travel and outdoor activities" are unsuitable for use during sleep.[47] In a 1971 sex education guide for teachers, the authors asserted that "it is crucial to use [menstrual pads] that are both convenient and appropriate for each individual," regardless of whether they are "traditional" or disposable.[48] From the perspective of these experts, the disposable menstrual pad represents merely one of the menstrual technologies available,

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[45] Statistics Korea, Census, 1970, <https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1IN7003&conn_path=I3 > [accessed, 11 October 2022]; "Purhwang igyŏnaen kiŏpkwa sangp'um 不況 이겨낸 企業과 上品 (Companies and Products That Overcame Recession)," *JoongAng Ilbo*, 7 December 1972.

[46] Kotex, Yuhan Kimberly, advertisement, *Women Donga*, October; November; December 1973.

[47] Kang Ji-yong 강지용, "Ch'ogyŏngi issŭl muryŏp 初經이 있을 무렵 (Around the Time at Which Menarche Occurs)," *Women Donga*, June 1970, 350–2.

[48] Ihwayŏdae in'ganbaltaryŏn'guso 이화여대 인간발달연구소, *Chunggogyosaengŭl wihan sŏnggyoyuk: kyehoekkwa shilche 중·고교생을 위한 성교육: 계획과 실제 (Sex Education for Middle- and High School Students: Plan and Practice)* (Kyoyukch'ulp'ansa, 1971), 74.

rather than the optimal menstrual technology. In this sense, the Kotex advertising campaign represented an ambitious plan to replace homemade pads with disposable ones.

For women, such advertisements often evoked an uneasy sensation. In *Women Donga* 1973, Kim Sŏng-suk, who identified herself as a housewife, articulated her disquiet regarding the "shameless [*yŏmch'iŏmnŭn*]" commercials for menstrual products, explicitly naming Kotex by Yuhan Kimberly.

> *It gets even more awkward when commercials for products related to women's periods, menstrual pads, or medicines for menstrual cramps are introduced. One example is a commercial for menstrual pads from the Y company. I'm not sure whether the company joined an American company or formed a partnership. Either way, the company puts a lot of emphasis on American things, brags about its performance in an unseemly way, and makes the audience feel embarrassed. It seems like the advertisers don't think about situations where parents-in-law, brothers-in-law, daughters-in-law, adult brothers and sisters watch such advertisements in the same room and feel embarrassed.*[49]

Her critique of menstrual product commercials demonstrates the embarrassment experienced by a few affluent women whose households owned televisions in the late 1970s, when menstruation was a taboo topic in public discourse. Simultaneously, it foreshadows the sentiments that most women would experience when using menstrual technology, which they had previously concealed even from their families, beyond the domestic sphere.

3.2. Using Menstruation Products in Public

Emerging Interest in Menstruation and Female Adolescents

In 1970, Kim Jae-han, a professor at Seoul Education College, published an article on menarche. In order to gather data for the article, Kim conducted a survey of 1,960 female students in middle- and high school in Seoul. The survey inquired about the students' experiences of menarche, their existing menstrual knowledge at that time, and how they felt. He reported that only 31% of the total group of respondents had any knowledge about menstruation before their first period, and that their lack of knowledge resulted in feelings of fear and embarrassment. Consequently, he called for the implementation of education on menstruation aimed at mitigating the psychological shock of

[49] Kim Sŏng-suk 김성숙, "TV wŏlp'yŏng: yŏmch'iŏmnŭn CM TV 月評: 염치없는 CM (Critics on TV: Shameless Commercials)," *Women Donga*, September 1973, 296.

menarche among adolescents.[50] His article signified a substantial shift in menstrual knowledge in the 1970s. Experts in the fields of education and medicine began to direct their attention toward menstruation, with a particular focus on the experiences, knowledge, and attitudes of adolescents in relation to this topic. As evidenced by Kim Mi-hyun's study on the medical discourse in colonial Korea, physicians' interest in menstruation was not a novel phenomenon in Korea.[51] However, the focus shifted from abnormal menstruation to the management of normal menstruation. Until the mid-1960s in Korea, physicians primarily addressed abnormal menstruation that necessitated medical intervention, such as ectopic pregnancy or anovulatory menstruation.[52] In the late 1960s, not only medical experts but also educational experts like Professor Kim began to view menstruation as a normal developmental phase in healthy adolescence.[53]

These studies reflected a growing interest in sex education and the female adolescents in the country. As many scholars have observed, in the late 1960s, the Park Chunghee government began to construct adolescents as gendered nationals (*kukmin*) in the process of nation-building. In the 1950s and 1960s, middle- and high school students, regardless of their gender, were expected to play a role in the country's reconstruction efforts following the Korean War. However, by the late 1960s, under

[50] Kim Jae-han 金濟漢, "Han'gukyŏsŏngŭi ch'ogyŏnge kwanhan chosayŏn'gu 韓國女性의 初經에 관한 調査研究 (A Survey on Woman's Menarchal [*sic*] in Korea)," *Sŏulgyoyuktaehak nonmunjip* 3 (1970): 167–80.

[51] Kim Mi-hyun, "Feeling Embarrassed would Cause Severe Diseases."

[52] Kim Suk-whan 金錫煥, "Mubaeransŏng wŏlgyŏnge taehayŏ 無排卵性月經에 對하여 (A Study of Anovulatory Menstruation)," *Taehansanbuin'gwahakhoeji* 3.1 (1960): 5–10; Yu Sŭng-hŏn 劉承憲, "Kwasowŏlgyŏng min muwŏlgyŏngŭi chindan'gwa ch'iryo 過少月經 및 無月經의 診斷과 治療 (Diagnosis and Treatment of Hypomenorrhea and Amenorrhea)," *Taehanŭihakhyŏphoeji* 4.5 (1961): 20–24; Chang Yoon-seok 장윤석, "Wŏlgyŏngjugi isangbuine issŏsŏ nyojung holmon chŏngnyange ŭihan noehasuch'e: nansogye siljop'anjŏnge kwanhan yŏn'gu 월경주기 이상부인에 있어서 뇨중 홀몬 정량에 의한 뇌하수체: 난소계 실조판정에 관한 연구 (Analysis of Disorders of Pituitary-Ovarian System in Women with Abnormal Menstrual Cycle by Quantitative Determination of Various Hormones in Urine)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 6.8 (1963): 287–306.

[53] Kang Hee-sub 康熙涉, "Ilbudosijiyŏk yŏsŏngŭi wŏlgyŏnge kwanhan chosayŏn'gu 一部都市地域 女性의 月經에 關한 調査研究 (A Survey on Menstruation of Women in an Urban Area [*sic*])," *Pogŏnhangnonjip*, 8.1 (1971): 179–92; Kim Jin-suk 김진숙 et al., "Han'guk yŏsŏngŭi ch'ogyŏnge kwanhan chosa pogo 한국 여성의 초경에 관한 조사 보고 (A Study on Korean Women's Menarche)," *Kŏn'ganggyoyuk* 7 (1974): 37–44; Lee Kang-oh 이강오, "Sunch'ŏnjibang yŏgosaengdŭrŭi wŏlgyŏnggwa chŏngsinwisaenge kwanhan chosa 順天地方 女高生들의 月經과 精神衛生에 關한 調査 (A Survey on Menstruation and Mental Health of High School Students in Soon Chun [*sic*])," *Chiyŏksahoeganhohakhoeji* 2.1 (1977): 210–11.

the new scheme, female students were regarded as future mothers and wives who would support their male counterparts who were expected to serve as industrial warriors in the future.[54]

In accordance with this approach, the Ministry of Culture and Education (hereafter MCE) commissioned Chungang Education Institutes in 1966 to establish an adversary commission for the purpose of publishing a guide for "chastity education [*sun'gyŏl kyoyuk*]," which had previously been a euphemism for sex education in the conservative society until the 1980s.[55] After two years, the MCE declared its intention to implement sex education in middle- and high school.[56] In 1970, the ministry collaborated with Family Planning Institutes to conduct a preliminary feasibility study involving 5,200 middle and high school students. In turn, in 1971, the MCE selected *Sex Education for Middle- and High School Students: Plan and Practice* (*Chunggogyosaengŭl wihan sŏnggyoyuk: kyehoekkwa shilche*, hereafter *Plan and Practice*) as an official guide for sex education in schools.[57] As evidenced by the involvement of Family Planning Institutes, both the new curriculum and this handbook were part and parcel of the national family planning program (hereafter FPP), which the government had initiated in 1961 with the objective of curbing population growth. Despite the preface's assertion that South Korea's rapid changes necessitate immediate sex education, the book itself included a section on "Family Planning" that reiterated the rhetoric of the FPP.[58]

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[54] Kwon In-sook 권인숙, "1950–70nyŏndae ch'ŏngsonyŏnŭi namsŏngsŏng hyŏngsŏnggwa kungmin mandŭlgiŭi sŏngbyŏrhwa Kwajŏng: ch'ŏngsonyŏn chapchi punsŏgŭl chungsimŭro 1950–70 년대 청소년의 남성성 형성과 국민 만들기의 성별화 과정: 청소년 잡지 분석을 중심으로 (The Formation of the Masculinity and Citizenship of Youth during 1950s–1970s: Focusing on Analyzing Youth Magazines)," *Han'gungminjogundongsayŏn'gu* 56 (2008): 281–321; Nah Yoon-kyeong 나윤경, "60–70nyŏndae kaebalgukka sidaeŭi haksaengjapchirŭl t'onghaesŏ pon 10tae yŏhaksaeng chuch'ehyŏngsŏnggwa kwallyŏnhan tamnonbun 60–70 년대 개발국가 시대의 학생잡지를 통해서 본 10 대 여학생 주체형성과 관련한 담론분석 (Analysis on Discourse on Teen Girls' Subjectivities in the 60s and 70s Through Student Magazines)," *Han'gungminjogundongsayŏn'gu* 56 (2008): 323–74.

[55] Lee Hee-young 이희영 and Lee Na-young 이나영, "Sŏngjosuk 'munje'ŭi t'ansaeng: 1960–70nyŏndae 'sŏngbyŏrhwadoen sŏng kwalli ch'eje'ŭi hyŏngsŏng 성조숙 '문제'의 탄생: 1960–70 년대 '성별화된 성 관리 체제'의 형성 (Constituting "Premature Girls" during the 1960s–70s in South Korea: A Gendered Regime of Sexual Efficiency)," *Asiayŏsŏngyŏn'gu* 58.3 (2019), 113.

[56] "Chunggogyoe sŏnggyoyuk 中·高生에 性교육 (Education for Middle and High School Students)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 9 July 1968.

[57] "Chunggogyo sŏnggyoyuk chich'imsŏ palgan 中高校 性教育 指針書 발간 (Publication of a Guide for Sex Education for Middle and High School)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 8 July 1971.

[58] Ihwayŏdae in'ganbaltaryŏn'guso, *Plan and Practice*, 5–9.

Given this context, examining the contents of the official guide *Plan and Practice* provides insight into the conceptualization of menstruation and adolescents by the government and education experts. In the chapter on menstruation, the authors set forth the objective of ensuring that students possess "accurate knowledge" of the "physiological and hygienic aspects, preparation, cleanup [*sahuch'ŏri*], and attitude" of menstruation. This is to enable them to address menstruation without "shame or annoyance."

> *Menstruation is a sign that a girl has grown up and is ready to begin her sexual function, which will enable her to play a role as a mother, has begun. It indicates the discharge of blood from the uterus, generally once a month. In other words, it denotes the secretion of blood that is prepared in the uterus when the ovum from the mature ovaries does not meet the sperm and does not result in conception. Thus, [teachers] should let [students] know that menstruation is a normal part of development, not a pathological one, and encourage them to take it naturally.*[59]

The authors advised educators to facilitate students' understanding of menstruation as a normal and natural process, emphasizing physiological and scientific perspectives rather than as pathological ones. However, they juxtaposed the physical and mental conditions that occur during menstruation with those that occur outside of menstruation, demonstrating how menstruating bodies should be treated differently than non-menstruating bodies. The authors argued that during menstruation, women experience a sense of bodily incoordination, accompanied by fatigue, abdominal pain, nausea, nervousness, and loss of appetite. They therefore advised women to be mindful of these symptoms during their periods, while maintaining regular activities with the exception of swimming, bathing, and strenuous exercise.

Concurrently, the content aligns with the enduring idea that menstruation is something that should be concealed. The authors underscored the significance of women using menstrual pads in a manner that is not discernible to others. For example, they advised that women replace their menstrual pads frequently on the second and third days of menstruation, when the amount of menstrual blood is at its greatest, in order to prevent odor. For homemade cloth pad users, the authors advised the use of a pouch for the collection of the pads following washing. The pouch was to be stored in a concealed location. For disposable menstrual pad users, the authors recommended disposal of the used pads, wrapped in paper, to avoid any potential discomfort to others.[60] In essence,

[59] Ihwayŏdae in'ganbaltaryŏn'guso, *Plan and Practice*, 72.

[60] Ihwayŏdae in'ganbaltaryŏn'guso, *Plan and Practice,* 74–5.

the authors conveyed the message that while menstruation is a normal or natural process, the menstruating body requires self-management in secret.

By the early 1970s, the corpus of physiological knowledge regarding menstruation and its management began to be disseminated through women's magazines targeting mothers with daughters. One such source of menstrual knowledge was the 1970 magazine article titled "Around the Time at which Menarche Occurs," authored by the female physician Kang Ji-yong. Kang advised readers and mothers to instruct their daughters that menstruation is "not a disease," as recommended by the authors of the official sex education guidelines. Additionally, she advised against excessive workloads, long-distance travel, strenuous exercise, bathing, swimming, and diet of spicy foods during menstruation.[61] In the subsequent year, the magazine distributed another analogous guide on menstruation. In the article titled "The Age at Which Menarche Occurs," the author, male OB/GYN Bae Byung-ju, recommended that mothers of daughters who would soon experience menarche educate them on the fact that menstruation is a "natural phenomenon" and how to manage menstruation in advance.[62] In this manner, women's magazines disseminated new knowledge about menstruation to mothers and their daughters. This knowledge was based on a medical understanding of menstruation and personal menstrual management, both of which were previously unknown to the mothers.

Increase of Disposable Menstrual Pad Users

In the mid-1970s, there were indications among urban women that disposable menstrual pads were evolving from a substitute for homemade cloth pads to a mainstream menstrual technology. In 1975, the daily newspaper *The Dong-A Ilbo* reported that young women were using "Western-style [menstrual] pads," while women in rural areas were still using "traditional menstrual pads," citing a World Health Organization (WHO)-sponsored survey of Korean women's menstrual patterns.[63] In the same year, disposable menstrual pads were among the commodities that were sold by the Yongsan branch of "House Wives Club," the predecessor of the Korean Woman's Federation for Consumers.

[61] Kang Ji-yong, "Around the Time at Which Menarche Occurs."

[62] Bae also conceived a method for tubal ligation called "mini lap" and a device for it and wrote several articles and books on women's health for the public, which will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Bae Byung-ju 배병주, "Ch'ogyŏngi issŭl nai 初經이 있을 나이 (The Age at Which Menarche Occurs)," *Women Donga*, March 1971, 358–61.

[63] "Han'gugyŏsŏngŭi saengni yuhyŏng: kimjŏnghŭissiŭi punsŏk 韓國女性의 <生理> 有形-金貞姬씨의 분석 (Korean Women's Menstruation Patterns: An Analysis by Ms. Kim Chŏng-hŭi)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 17 October 1975.

Along with rice, sesame oil, ginseng, shampoo, Korean traditional socks (*beoseon*), and sewing patterns, Kotex New Freedom was listed as one of the commodities.[64]

In *The* 1978 *Dong-A Ilbo article*, Yi Byŏng-ju, a prominent male author known for historical and popular novels, wrote that the "item that cannot be named" and the disposable menstrual pad were two items in a handbag that distinguished young women in the 1970s from those in the 1960s.[65] In 1977, *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* reported that disposable menstrual pads had become a "necessity [*saengp'ilp'um*]" "even" in rural areas, citing the observation of a female pharmacist in a rural town.

> *Every market day, the bestselling item is temporary [*kani*] menstrual pads, which have recently been advertised in newspapers. Women in rural areas who visited Uchŏng or Sagang [regional] market with their neighbors would often buy several menstrual pads. In fact, some women even walk for a dozen kilometers to buy menstrual pads alone, so I guess that the menstrual pads have become a necessity even in rural areas.*[66]

How did disposable menstrual pads transform from an unreliable substitute for cloth menstrual pads to a daily necessity? In other words, how did women choose disposable menstrual pads over homemade menstrual pads that fitted their individual bodies?

One of the most significant factors contributing to this shift was the sustained growth in income level across South Korea throughout the 1970s, driven by rapid industrialization. This had a profound impact on the everyday lives of South Koreans, including the position in which women were situated and their use of feminine technology. Throughout the 1970s, South Korea's per capita income exhibited a growth rate exceeding 10%, with the exception of 1975, when the Oil Shock influenced the global economy, leading to an increase in per household expenditure. In 1977, the average monthly total household expenditure was 87,410 won, representing a 15% increase compared to the previous year and a 170% increase compared to 1971.[67] As historian Lee Sang-rok notes, in the context of the economic shift, Koreans began to spend a greater proportion of their income on items beyond

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[64] "Kakkwangbannŭn wit'akp'anmae yongsanyŏsŏnghoegwan 각광 받는 <共同위탁판매> 龍山女性會館 (Group Consignment Sales Became Popular in Yongsan Women's Hall)," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 17 October 1975.

[65] The "item that cannot be named" seems to be contraceptives or devices that people could buy easily because the national family planning program relaxed regulations. Yi Byŏng-ju 이병주, "70nyŏndaeshikyŏsŏng chap'wado katkaji haendŭbaek 70 年代式女性 (10) 雜貨도 갖가지: 핸드백 (Women in 70s (10) Several Items: A Handbag)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 12 January 1978.

[66] "Taedamhan kaebang p'ungjo 대담한 開放 풍조 (Bold, Progressive Mood)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 11 August 1977.

[67] Statistics Korea, Kagudonghyangjosa: p'ummokpyŏl kagudang wŏlp'yŏnggyun kagyesuji 경제활동인구조사: 품목별 가구당 월평균 가계수지 (Economic Active Population Survey: Monthly Averages of Household Income and Expenditure by Item), https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1L60022&conn_path=I3%0A [accessed, 12 October 2022]

food and housing. This was despite the fact that the authoritarian government placed significant emphasis on thrift and saving (*geungeomjeoryak*), with the introduction of measures such as the Simplified Family Ritual Standard (*kajŏngŭiryejunch'ik*), which set out protocols for rituals, including marriage, funerals, and ancestral rites, with the aim of curbing excessive consumption. Rather, the emphasis on saving *per se* demonstrates that people desired to consume, a goal that the government attempted to repress but ultimately failed to achieve.[68]

Such a transformation gradually impacted the everyday lives of Korean people, facilitating greater participation beyond the domestic sphere. By the 1970s, an increasing number of Koreans were able to engage in leisure activities that had previously been accessible only to the wealthy. Concurrently, the manner of engaging leisure time activities shifted from primarily indoor pursuits such as reading books and listening to music to outdoor activities such as picnics, hiking, and fishing.[69] Consequently, a greater number of Korean women required disposable menstrual pads when engaging in these activities. As observed by the physician Kang Ji-yong, while disposable menstrual pads were less reliable in absorbing blood, they allowed their users to carry and replace them in public toilets with greater ease than homemade cloth pads.

Furthermore, an increasing number of women were employed and enrolled in schools. The number of female workers increased gradually throughout the 1960s and 1980s as a result of the rapid industrialization that occurred during this period. This was due in part to the promotion of labor-intensive light industries by the Park government, which included textile, shoe, cloth, and wig manufacturing. These industries employed young women at low wages. The number of female workers aged 15–49 demonstrated a general increase throughout the 1970s, with the exception of a slight decline observed between 1979 and 1980. In 1975, the number of female workers in this age group was 3 million, rising to 3.5 million in 1976, and reaching 4.2 million by 1980.[70] Since the inception of compulsory elementary education in 1950, the number of female students had increased gradually. Despite the female proportion of the total student body being smaller than the male proportion, both

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[68] Lee sang-rok 이상록, "1970nyŏndae sobiŏkchejŏngch'aekkwa sobimunhwaŭi ilsangjŏngch'ihak 1970 년대 소비억제정책과 소비문화의 일상정치학 (The Consumption Control Policy and the Politics of Everyday Life of Consumer Culture in the 1970s)," *Yŏksamunjeyŏn'gu* 29 (2013): 137–82.

[69] Song Eun-young 송은영, "1970nyŏndae yŏgamunhwawa taejungsobiŭi chŏngch'I 1970 년대 여가문화와 대중소비의 정치 (The Politics of Leisure Culture and Mass Consumption in 1970s)," *Hyŏndaemunhagŭi yŏn'gu* 50 (2013): 39–72.

[70] Statistics Korea, "「Kyŏngjehwaldongin'gujosa」: sŏng/yŏllyŏngbyŏl ch'wiŏpcha 「경제활동인구조사」: 성/연령별 취업자 (Economic Active Population Survey: The Number of Employees by Gender and Age), https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1DA7024S&conn_path=I3 [accessed, 17 October 2022]

the absolute number and the percentage of female students rose. Between 1969 and 1980, the number of female students in secondary schools increased from 600,000 to approximately two million.[71]

The aforementioned shifts in leisure patterns, economic participation of women, and the number of female students have resulted in a greater proportion of women opting for disposable menstrual pads, which allow them the convenience of carrying and replacing used pads as needed. Pak Jung-suk recalled that her transition from the elementary school to middle school and a subsequent change in her body prompted her to begin to use disposable menstrual pads. Since her menarche in 1975, during elementary school, she had used cotton menstrual pads made by her mother for two years. She remembered that the cotton pads were softer and more comfortable than the disposable pads that she used later, and her mother considered the cloth pads “better.” However, as her menstrual flow increased and replacing used cloth pads at school became challenging, she switched to disposable pads, which were convenient to carry and replace.[72]

The relocation of women led to changes in the ways in which menstrual knowledge was generated and disseminated. Women (sometimes unintentionally) disseminated their experiences and methods of dealing with menstrual blood, which had been discussed only occasionally between elder and younger female family members. Song Yŏng-ja (born in 1953), the eldest daughter in her family, used cotton menstrual pads until the 1990s, at the age of forty due to her lack of awareness about the existence of disposable pads. Upon completion of her elementary education, she was required to assist her parents on the family farm, in contrast to her siblings, who enrolled in secondary school. She maintained this status until her marriage. Upon her children reaching the age at which they no longer require her care, she began working in a factory in her forties in order to supplement her husband’s income, following the recommendation of a friend who had previously worked at the same factory. At her place of work, she would dispose of soiled cloth pads in a wastebasket in the toilet because she was unaware of the existence of disposable pads and was unable to find a way to transport the used cloth pads home. Upon observing the used cloth pads in the wastebasket, her friend and coworker informed her of the existence of disposable pads. Subsequently, she became a

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[71] Taehan’gyoyukyŏnhap’oe 대한교육연합회, *Han’gukkyoyukyŏn’gam 1970nyŏnp’an 한국교육연감 1970 년판 (The Yearbook of Korean Education in 1970)* (Saehanshinmunsa, 1970); Ministry of Culture and Education 문교부, *Mun’gyot’onggyeyŏnbo 문교통계연보 (Statistical Year Book of Education)* (1971; 1973; 1975; 1978; 1981; 1984).

[72] Pak Jŏng-suk, interview.

user of disposable menstrual pads.[73] An Min-ja (born in 1965) first became aware of disposable menstrual pads in the late 1970s when a classmate informed her of their existence. The classmate had noticed that An was taking a clean homemade cloth pad from her bag in order to replace it with her used cloth pads, and suggested she try disposable pads. An subsequently conveyed the information to her, who had been unaware of the product. An has used disposable menstrual pads ever since.[74]

As more women used disposable menstrual pads, the menstrual product industry saw significant growth. Since the mid-1970s, the pharmaceutical and paper manufacturing companies that observed the increasing demand for menstrual products entered the market, which had been previously dominated by Yuhan Kimberly.[75] In 1975, Youngjin Pharmaceutical launched disposable menstrual pads under the brand name Sophia. In 1978, Hankook Charm, a company established by Ilyang Pharmaceutical, entered into a technical partnership with a Japanese menstrual product manufacturer, Unicharm Corporation, and launched its menstrual pads, which were named Ch'yamingsyanel.[76] Meanwhile, some entrepreneurs directed their attention to another disposable menstrual product, the tampon. In a span of just two years, from 1976 to 1978, three companies released tampons, as will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.3.[77]

In their advertisements in the mid-1970s, not only the early movers but also the latecomers no longer provided explanations regarding the purpose of menstrual pads or drew comparisons between them and homemade cloth pads in terms of convenience. Instead, the advertisements targeted girls and young women, promoting their menstrual products as more aligned with the image of the West and attractiveness. In December of 1975, Yuhan Kimberly released an advertisement for Kotex New Freedom, appealing to the desire for the West. In the advertisement, which featured the emerging actress Yi Yŏng-ok, the advertiser attempted to persuade "young women who desired to act with

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[73] Song Yŏng-ja, interview.

[74] An Min-ja, interview.

[75] "Mup'ungŭi saengnidae sijang ch'unt'u irŏ 無風의 生理帶시장 春鬪일어 (Emerging Competition This Spring in the Calm Menstrual Pad Market)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 3 April 1976.

[76] The pronunciation of *Ch'yamingsyanel* concurs with that of the famous French fashion house Chanel. As the manufacturer marked its product's name only in Korean, it is difficult to tell whether the identical pronunciation is a just coincidence or the manufacturer's intention to remind consumers of the image of a luxurious fashion house. At least by the 1970s, Chanel had become widely known in South Korea, to the extent that a Korean confectionery company named its products *Chanel cake*, also after the fashion house. "Rait'ŏsŏ kogŭbŭiryukkaji p'anch'inŭn katcha oejesangp'yo 라이터서 高級衣類까지 판치는 가짜 外製商標 (Pervasive Fake Foreign Trademarks from Lighter to Fine Apparel)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 17 November 1978.

[77] Dong-A Pharmaceutical is not relevant to *the Dong-A llbo* with the same name, which also published the magazine *Women Donga*.

freedom" to join the group of Kotex users, which included women from "around the globe." The advertisement, which was strikingly similar to that of its American partner Kimberly-Clark in 1972, appealed to the desire for the Western ideal, represented by the United States. The Korean model's appearance in a sleeveless stars-and-stripes shirt worn with blue jeans explicitly designed to evoke an association between Kotex, freedom, and the United States.[78] Similarly, Youngjin Pharmaceutical, the latecomer and manufacturer of Sophia menstrual pads, employed a comparable strategy to appeal to prospective users. In its December 1975 advertisement, the company featured a renowned actress of the period, Jung So-nyu, positioned in front of a European-style mansion, donning a beret and cape in a manner reminiscent of Parisian life. She introduced Sophia as "Sophia, the most popular menstrual pad among European women, is coming."[79]

The intensifying competition in the menstrual product market gave rise to a proliferation of advertisements, which were disseminated not only in newspapers and magazines but also broadcast on television. The promotion of menstrual products on television was not a novel phenomenon, as evidenced by the aforementioned complaint by Kim Sŏng-suk regarding Kotex commercials in 1973. However, throughout the late 1970s, as television ownership increased rapidly, from 20% in 1973 to 87% in 1980, the position of television in the society shifted from a luxury to a necessity.[80] This resulted in increased visibility of menstruation and menstrual technology in public through the mass media. The frequent commercials for menstrual products drew backlash from those who considered menstruation to be something that should be concealed.

In 1975, the Broadcasting Ethics Committee of the Korea Broadcasting Commission (hereafter BEC) published a list of 266 commercials that violated the Regulation of Korean Broadcasting Ethics. The BEC identified nine advertisements as having the potential to elicit feelings of "disgust or antipathy." These included an insecticide advertisement with the phrase "cockroaches that eat, spit and excrete," and a disposable menstrual pad commercial stating that "its female menstrual pads are completely waterproof."[81] In 1977, journalist Yi Hyŏn-rak of *The Dong-a Ilbo* expressed concern about the prevalence of menstrual product commercials, noting that Korea was the only country where

[78] Kotex New Freedom, Kimberly-Clark, advertisement, *Family Circle*, August 1972; Kotex New Freedom, Yuhan Kimberly, advertisement, *Women Donga*, October 1975.

[79] Sophia, Youngjin Pharmaceutical, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo,* 27 December 1975.

[80] Ministry of Culture and Public information 문화공보부, *Munhwagongbo 30nyŏn 文化公報 30 年 (History of Thirty Years of Culture and Public Information),* 1979, 251; Laura C Nelson, *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* (Columbia University Press, 2000), 87.

[81] "Yŏjŏnhan chŏjil kwanggo 여전한 저질廣告 (Ongoing Indecent Advertisements)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 22 January 1975.

menstrual product commercials were permitted during family viewing hours.[82] Indeed, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) in the United States had regulated the content of menstrual product advertisements and the timeslots for such commercials since 1972.[83] In 1979, Kim Yong-gu, a male reader of *The Dong-a Ilbo,* expressed his concern about the influence of advertisements for menstrual products on children.

> *In my part-time job, I meet elementary and middle school students, and I'm often shocked by the outrageous topics they discuss. They would imitate what was shown in commercials for contraceptives and menstrual products just for fun. (…) When I saw the students saying that "menstrual pads with good absorption" or "this is how contraceptive medicine works," I thought it was too late to scold them. My face burns with shame when I see TV commercials that show a woman's breast and abdomen in front of the family. I think the government should ban such commercials or conduct sex education.*[84]

These concerns were ultimately addressed in 1980 when the Korean Broadcasting Association implemented a ban on all menstrual product commercials under the Broadcasting Self-Control Plan, a voluntary regulatory framework for "the improvement of good citizens, healthy families, and sound social ethics."[85] However, despite this regulatory shift, the competition among menstrual product manufacturers and their promotional activities persisted. In fact, their efforts became increasingly targeted and sophisticated, as will be discussed in Section 3.3.

Being Users of New Menstrual Technology in Public

As disposable menstrual pads pervaded women's everyday lives, the technology requested new actions from its users. Users of the technology were requested to take actions to fit the technology to their bodies, in accordance with the long-standing idea that menstruation should be concealed. As the homemade menstrual pad users washed and dried the cloth pads in secret, even in their own homes, disposable menstrual pad users grappled with the challenge of concealing the fact that they were purchasing and carrying the products in public spaces. In the 1970s, disposable menstrual pads were

[82] Yi Hyŏn-rak 이현락, "TV kanggo: kŭ piriwa kaesŏnŭi kil(2) 広告 그 非理와 改善의 길(2) (TV Commercials: Its Problems and Resolutions(2))," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 22 November 1977.

[83] Janice Delaney et al., *The Curse*, 134.

[84] Kim Yong-ku 김용구, "Natttŭgŏun TVkwanggo mant'a 낯뜨거운 TV 廣告 많다 (Numerous Embarrassing TV Commercials)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 27 April 1979.

[85] "Naedalbut'ŏ kyoyangp'ŭro 40%isang hwaktae 내달부터 教養프로 40%이상 擴大 (The Portion of Educational Television Programs will Increase to over 40% from next Month)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 21 August 1980.

predominantly available for purchase at pharmacies, where customers were required to request the item in person.[86] When women sought to purchase disposable menstrual pads from a pharmacy, they would first ascertain whether the pharmacist was female. In the event that the pharmacist was not female, the women would then proceed to locate another pharmacy that employed a female pharmacist. In the event that other customers were present in the female pharmacist's place, they would wait until the other customers left.[87] Chŏng Mi-hyŏn (born in 1966) recalled that she was too embarrassed to purchase her own disposable pads, so she handed her younger brother a note listing the brand name "Sophia" so that he would procure them for her.[88] Another new request for the users was to bring the disposable pads home in secret. However, manufacturers and retailers shared this burden. Yuhan Kimberly and Youngjin Pharmaceutical distributed their menstrual pads wrapped in paper.[89] Alternatively, as An Min-Ja did, some women requested that the pharmacist wrap the products so that they would not be revealed to others.[90]

The users of this product were confronted with a further new request pertaining to the mass-produced artifact. They were compelled to develop techniques to bridge the gap between the body assumed by the manufacturers and their own bodies. Some women used two disposable pads, with the ends of one pad overlapping the front of another. Once the front pad became saturated with menstrual blood, it was discarded, and the back pad, which had absorbed less blood, was elevated to the front position.[91] In the mid-1970s, Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng, a high school student at the time, became aware of this technique for using two menstrual pads simultaneously from her friend. However, rather than following the aforementioned technique, she simply positioned disposable menstrual pads more posteriorly than usual on her underwear prior to retiring for the night, thus preventing menstrual

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[86] The sale of disposable menstrual product beyond pharmacies was illegal before the 1975 amendment to the Pharmaceutical Affair Act that stipulates cotton products for "hygienic purposes," like disposable menstrual pads, as quasi-medicine.

[87] Noah Ji-eun, "Menstruation and the Cultural Taboos," 63; Sin Yang-suk, interviewed by the author, 2018; An Mi-suk, interview; Kim Hye-su, interviewed by the author, 2018; An Min-hja, interview; Yi Su-yŏn, interviewed by the author, 2021.

[88] Chŏng Mi-hyŏn, interviewed by the author, 2018.

[89] Chang Sŏk-chin 장석진, "Urinara yŏsŏng saengniyongp'um chejoŏbŭi maak'et'inge kwanhan yŏn'gu 우리나라 女性 生理用品 製造業의 마아케팅에 관한 研究 (A Study on Marketing Feminine Hygiene Product Manufacturing Businesses in South Korea)" (master's thesis, Korea University, 1981), 74.

[90] An Min-ja, interview.

[91] Chang Hyŏn-suk, interviewed by the author, 2018; Han Ji-suk, interviewed by the author, 2018; Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng, interviewed by the author, 2018.

blood from leaking during her sleep.[92] An Min-ja placed sheets of toilet paper between her buttocks to prevent any leakage.[93]

Some women used both disposable pads and homemade menstrual pads. Sin Yang-suk (born in 1957) used disposable menstrual pads at school and her homemade pads made of gauze at home. She found that the disposable menstrual pads "were of too poor quality" and "nearly always stuck to [her] body."[94] Her recollection was consistent with the fact that the first adhesive-strip menstrual pads, which allowed women to affix them to their underwear, were introduced by Johnson & Johnson in 1969 and subsequently introduced in South Korea by Yuhan Kimberly in 1975.[95]

Sin's use of both disposable pads and homemade menstrual pads was not unique. An Min-ja recalled that she used disposable pads at her high school and cloth pads at home for economic reasons. At that time, her family lacked the financial resources to procure sufficient disposable menstrual pads for her entire menstrual cycle. Consequently, she would purchase only one package of twenty disposable pads. By calculating the requisite number of pads, the amount of her changing menstrual blood depending on menstrual pattern, and the number of hours spent in school, she determined which menstrual pads to use and how many to use them per day. During each menstrual cycle, she used three or four disposable menstrual pads per day from the third to the fifth day, when her menstrual blood was at its heaviest, and one or two pads for the remainder of the period in school. At home, she used cloth pads.[96] It is important to note that not all women employed such techniques to fit the manufactured menstrual products to their bodies. In recalling her own experience, Cho Kyŏng-mi stated that she did not feel the need to employ such techniques, as her menstrual blood flowed "very lightly" for a mere three days, and contemporary disposable pads were sufficient for absorbing her menstrual blood.[97] The particularities of individual bodies with varying shapes and menstrual patterns, coupled with the economic circumstances surrounding women and the materiality of technology, have shaped the requests and demands associated with the same technology in diverse ways.

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[92] Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng, interview.

[93] An Min-ja, interview.

[94] Sin Yang-suk, interview.

[95] Thomas Heinrich and Bob Batchelor, *Kotex, Kleenex, Huggies: Kimberly-Clark and the Consumer Revolution in American Business* (Ohio State University Press, 2004), 173; Kotex New Freedom, Yuhan Kimberly, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 10 March 1975.

[96] An Min-ja, interview.

[97] Cho Kyŏng-mi, interviewed by the author, 2018.

Nevertheless, all users of disposable menstrual pads received the same request from the product, which represents a manifestation of the long-standing idea that menstrual bodies should be concealed. The disposable menstrual technology requested that its users manage it in secret. Homemade menstrual pad users were compelled to conceal their used pads until they could wash them and needed to keep the washing and drying process secret from even family members. Disposable menstrual pad users were similarly compelled to conceal the used pads that hinted at their menstruation. Some women recalled the efforts made by themselves and their families to conceal used disposable menstrual pads in pit latrines, which were a common feature of South Korean environments until the 1980s. In 1981, only 20% of the country had access to flush toilets. This figure increased to 50% in 1989, with a considerably higher percentage observed in urban areas.[98] Once girls discarded their used pads in the pit latrine, their mothers and elder sisters would disguise the highly visible red and white menstrual pads into the dark pit, by spreading ashes, and, on occasion, newspapers over them. In the event that the ash did not reach the intended position, the process was repeated until successful. Some women disposed of the used pads wrapped in paper.[99] In urban areas where flush toilets were widely installed, women also took similar actions to conceal the used pads. In an article titled "*Menstrual Pad Waste*" in the magazine *Ppurigip'ŭn namu,* journalist Ko Do-won presented the findings of a survey of 279 women in Seoul. The survey indicated that 22% of respondents flushed their used pads, while 71% placed them in waste baskets. Meanwhile, 87% of respondents indicated that they wrapped the pads in "paper or a similar material" prior to discarding them.[100]

In response to the requests from disposable menstrual pads, the users developed techniques and know-how. The female users purchased, carried, and used the pads in ways that manufacturers did not intend. These uses were influenced by the sociocultural expectations surrounding menstruation and the users' economic or bodily conditions. The ways in which the users utilized the pads illustrate

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[98] Ministry of Home Affairs 내무부, *Han'guktoshiyŏn'gam 한국도시연감 (Municipal Year Book of Korea)* (Ministry of Home Affairs: 1972; 1975; 1979; 1980; 1981; 1983; 1984; 1986; 1987; 1988; 1989; 1990; 1991).

[99] An Min-ja; An Mi-suk, interview.

[100] In contrast to many Western countries, the majority of South Koreans have recently been disposing of used toilet paper in the trash cans provided in each restroom stall, rather than flushing it down. This is evidenced by the fact that in 1999, *The Chosun Ilbo* called for the removal of trash cans from restrooms. Ko To-wŏn 고도원, "'Saengnidae' ssŭregi '생리대' 쓰레기 (Menstrual Pads Wastes)," *Ppurigip'ŭnnamu*, February 1979, 96–104; Kim Hyŏng-gi 金亨基, "Susesigindedo wen naemsae…: 수세식인데도 웬 냄새…: (Unpleasant Odor in Flush Toilets)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 10 April 1999.

the tensions between the long-standing idea and new technology, as well as between technology and various bodies. These tensions would continue, but would be shaped differently in the 1980s.

3.3. New Technologies and Vulnerable Menstruating Bodies

A Whole New Menstrual Technology

While more Korean women engaged with disposable menstrual pads, another disposable menstrual product was introduced in South Korea: the tampon. As previously stated, between the years 1976 and 1978, three companies introduced tampons to the market. The initial advertisement for Mongk'ŭrin, released by Hwagang Yanghaeng, asserted that the product was being used by "nearly all women worldwide."[101] In the subsequent year, Dong-A Pharmaceutical released an advertisement for its Tempo tampon, which it claimed was being used by "women across the globe." In 1978, Pacific Chemical, the predecessor of Amore Pacific, promoted its Amore tampon, asserting that it was "currently in vogue all over the world." Indeed, the term "the world" referred to the Western world, as evidenced by the predominantly white models with blonde or brown hair featured in Tempo advertisements, rather than the whole world. This strategy, which showcased the popularity of their products in the West, was a similar approach to that adopted by manufacturers of disposable menstrual pads.

However, the advertisements diverged from those for menstrual pads, in that they positioned the tampon as a novel menstrual technology rather than merely as an improvement on "traditional pads." As stated by the manufacturers, Mongk'ŭrin opens up "a new choice of menstrual product," Tempo follows "the disposable pads that have replaced traditional menstrual pads" and Amore tampon is newer than "[disposable] pads that already replaced *gaejim* a long time ago."[102] Concurrently, all of the advertisements highlighted that the novel technology of the tampon allows activities that neither "traditional" nor disposable menstrual pads were capable of. In its advertisement, Dong-A Pharmaceutical articulated this as follows:

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[101] Although the manufacturer did not write the name "Mongk'ŭrin" in English, it seems to have intended as "Mon-Clean," implying cleanliness.

[102] In the advertisement for Amore tampon published by Pacific Chemical, the terms *p'aedŭ* and *saenridae* were used to refer to disposable menstrual pads and traditional cloth pads, respectively. Mongk'ŭrin, Hwagang Yanghaeng, advertisement, *Chosun Ilbo*, 31 March 1976; Tempo, Dong-A Pharmaceutical, advertisement, *Women Donga*, July 1977; Amore Tampon, Pacific Chemical, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 8 February 1978.

> *What's the rationale behind Western women using tampons? Why are we proposing the use of tampons? Tampons is a more effective solution to the inconvenience of menstruation than menstrual pads[生理帶,* saenridae*]. Tampons can remove mental and physical discomfort during menstruation. Thus, you can take care of your home and work anytime and anywhere. Yo can also enjoy swimming, hiking, playing tennis, and other activities that are otherwise difficult during your period. [emphasis mine]*[103]

Similarly, the manufacturers said: Mongk'ŭrin allows "swimming, bathing, and using the bathroom freely," while Amore Tampon allows "intense activities like riding a bike or horseback riding."[104]

Such a series of tampon advertisements in various print media reflect the manufacturers' expectations that they would be able to obtain a market share that was comparable to those of disposable pads in the expanding market for menstrual products, even if their novel menstrual product did not entirely supplant them. Given the widespread popularity of the tampon in the Western countries, this expectation was not an implausible one. One source from Dong-A Pharmaceutical indicated that by that time, the tampon had gained a significant portion of the market share in "the feminine hygiene product market" in several countries. In 1978, the market share of tampons in the United States was 46%, while in Sweden it was 49%. In some countries, there was a notable increase in market share. From 1972 to 1978, the market share of the tampon in New Zealand increased from 51% to 62%, and in West Germany from 27% to 42%. In Japan, a neighboring country of Korea, the market share increased from 10% to 18%. By 1978, it appeared that the expectations of Korean tampon manufacturers had been validated. From 1977 to 1978, the market share of tampons in South Korea increased from 2.9% to 6.1%.[105] However, despite these gains, tampon manufacturers in South Korea encountered significant challenges when expanding their user base. By 1989, approximately a decade after the introduction of the product, its market share had declined to 1.3%. Furthermore, the market was dominated by just two brands of tampons, Tempo and Tampax, which were imported from the United States by Daewoong Pharmaceutical.[106]

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[103] Tempo, Dong-A Pharmaceutical, advertisement, *Women Donga*, July 1977.

[104] Mongk'ŭrin, Hwagang Yanghaeng, advertisement, *Chosun Ilbo*, 31 March 1976; Tempo, Dong-A Pharmaceutical, advertisement, *Women Donga*, July 1977; Amore Tampon, Pacific Chemical, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 8 February 1978.

[105] Chang Sŏk-chin, "A Study on Marketing Feminine Hygiene Product," 28.

[106] Tampax was the brand name for tampons manufactured by Tambrands Inc., a US-based international manufacturers of feminine hygiene products. Korean Consumer Agency 한국소비자원, *Yŏsŏngyong saengnidae(Tampon)ŭi TSS chŭnghu yebangŭl wihan choch'i* 女性用 生理帶(Tampon)의 TSS 症候 豫防을 위한 措置 (Measures to Prevent TSS Syndrome by Female Menstrual Tampons) (Korean Consumer Agency, 1990), 131–36.

What factors contributed to the commercial failure of tampons in South Korea? While the question has not been extensively examined by scholars, a few hypotheses have been proposed by feminist scholars. Bark-Yi Eun-sil attributes the failure primarily to 'sexual perception' and secondarily to a concern about toxic shock syndrome (TSS), which was allegedly caused by tampons and reported in the United States around 1980.[107] Indeed, in the country, the reports of some tampon users who suffered from lethal TSS symptoms made many women reluctant to use them, resulting in a significant decline in the market share of tampons between 1980 and 1983.[108] Noah Ji-eun posits that "the myth of the hymen" and "the chastity ideology," which dictates that women must remain chaste until marriage is responsible for the failure.[109] Some women's experiences and voices appear to corroborate these hypotheses regarding women's sexuality. In 1985, for instance, a young female reader of *Female Students* inquired as to whether the tampon would damage the hymen, as previously mentioned at the outset of this chapter.[110] Some of the women I interviewed recalled hearing rumors of tampons that caused diseases in the United States, although they had never heard of TSS.[111]

Nevertheless, these hypotheses provide only a partial explanation of the general aversion of Korean women to tampons. As will be demonstrated, the concerns regarding the hymen or diseases were not the sole reason for their reluctance to use tampons; rather, they were merely one of the reasons. Moreover, these hypotheses were unable to account for the observed increase in the market share of tampons from 1977 to 1978. This indicates that they overlook the presence of tampon users who contributed to this increase, despite the fact that it was only temporary. In light of the aforementioned evidence, it is reasonable to inquire: Why did Korean women not attempt to use tampons, and why did some cease using them?

The Complicated Menstrual Technology

One of the reasons why Korean women ceased using tampons was that the technology had markedly disparate material and physical properties from those of the preexisting menstrual pads, thereby necessitating unconventional actions from its users. As Sara Vostral notes, the origin of tampons differs from that of sanitary napkins, which were invented by entrepreneurs. By the early 20th century

[107] Bark-Yi Eun-sil 박이은실, *Wŏlgyŏngŭi chŏngch'ihak* 월경의 정치학 (The Politics of Menstruation) (Tongnyŏk, 2015), 154.

[108] Sharra Louise Vostral, *Toxic Shock: A Social History* (NYU Press, 2018), 157–60; Heinrich and Batchelor, *Kotex, Kleenex, Huggies*, 164–5.

[109] Noah Ji-eun, "Saengnidae kwanggo," 238.

[110] "Osundosun sangdamshil 오순도순 상담실 (A Counseling Office)," *Female Students*, October 1985, 328.

[111] An Min-ja; Chang Hyŏn-suk, interview.

in the United States, the primary users of tampons were physicians. They used tampons to absorb patients' blood from injuries or vaginal secretions, or to prevent conception by soaking them in certain chemicals. With the advent of sanitary pads in the 1920s, the medical device was repurposed as a menstrual product, leading to a series of patents for menstrual tampons, which were eventually mass-manufactured in the 1930s.[112]

In general, menstrual tampons are composed of a cylindrical absorptive element designed to absorb menstrual blood, and a string attached to the absorptive element. The string is employed for the purpose of extracting and removing the absorber once it has been used. Tampons can be classified into two categories based on the method of absorber insertion into the vagina. Applicator tampons are characterized by the inclusion of applicators that facilitate the insertion of the absorber into the vagina. Some companies produced tampons with a stick applicator, as Kimberly-Clark manufactured stick applicator tampons Kotams in the 1960s. However, such designs have nearly disappeared from the market.[113] The majority of applicator tampons are designed to fit into a syringe that contains the absorber. The user inserts the absorber into the outer tube of the applicator by depressing the plunger of the syringe. Digital or non-applicator tampons are designed for use with fingers in lieu of applicators for the insertion of an absorber.[114] In the United States during the 1930s, Wix and Kimberly-Clark manufactured their digital tampons Wix tampons and Fibs, respectively. In Germany, Carl Hahn GmbH launched O.B. tampons, which remain on the market to this day.[115] In South Korea, Hwagang Yanghaeng opted for a stick applicator for its Mongk'ŭrin and Dong-A Pharmaceutical employed a cardboard applicator for Tempo. In contrast, Pacific Chemical manufactured Amore Tampons without an applicator. These were essentially O.B. tampons that incorporated "the machinery, technology, and materials of the Carl Hahn company."[116]

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[112] Vostral, *Under wraps*, 76–7.

[113] Heinrich and Batchelor, *Kotex, Kleenex, Huggies*, 178.

[114] One of the meanings of the word "digital" is "of or relating to the fingers or toes." Merriam-Webster.com, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/digital [accessed, 19 October 2022]

[115] Vostral, *Under wraps*, 76–8.

[116] The official manufacturing approval for "Amore tampon (O.B. regular)" also supports the partnership between Pacific Chemical and Carl Hahn. Minister of Health and Social Affairs, Bureau of Medicine Affairs, Division of Medical Affairs, "A Manufacturing Approval of Pacific Chemical Amore tampon (O.B. Regular)" in Files of "Medical Equipment Manufacturing Approvals," 1977, National Archives of Korea, Reference No.BA0127329; Amore Tampon, Pacific Chemical, advertisement, *Female Students*, December 1978.

Irrespective of the specific type, tampons demanded a series of actions for inserting them into the individual human body of the user. For most Korean women, the actions were unusual and intricate because they went beyond merely pushing the device into the body. Tampons that were not properly positioned in the vagina would cause discomfort, pain, or blood staining of underwear. Similar to American tampon users, Korean women expressed difficulties in using or inserting them.[117] An illustrative example can be found in a 1977 issue of the magazine *Female Students*, in an article entitled "Our Secret Story: What do Teens Worry about?" The article features a discussion among four high school students on topics related to menstruation, "vaginal discharge [taeha]," and masturbation. Identified by their full names, the students engaged in this conversation with OB/GYN Sŏ U-kap, who served as a counselor in the discussion. The discussion highlights the women's responses to the complex demands of this unusual menstrual technology.

> *Kim Kyŏng[-hye]: Is it okay for me to use a tampon (*chihyŏljŏn*) during gym class? My mom said that I shouldn't use tampons just yet because I am still young.*
>
> *Sŏ U[-kap]: If you use a junior-sized tampon and insert it with clean hands in the right position, you shouldn't have any problems. The tampon is a new menstrual product, so some mothers may not be aware of it. I suppose that's one of the reasons why people are against using tampons.*
>
> *Bang Jin[-yŏng]: I am using the tampon. When I swam and took a test, I used it in the way that I learned from my friend and a member of my school sports team. Using tampons wasn't difficult.*
>
> *Sŏ U: It looks like the seniors are showing the younger athletes how to use it. By the way, Miss An, did you experience any pain when you first used a tampon?*
>
> *An Mi[-suk]: It wasn't easy, but I didn't feel any pain. So I told my mom, and she said that I could use tampons like my sister does.*
>
> *Sŏ U: Many people said that they failed to use tampons. That's because they were afraid. Although there is detailed information on the instructions, it may be better to learn how to use them from elders or older sisters, step by step.*[118]

[117] Freidenfelds, *The Modern Period,* 184–5.

[118] The participants' full names were written on the top of the article and abbreviated in the quotation. "Uuridŭlmanŭi iyagi: t'ine manhŭn kominŭn? 우리들만의 이야기: 틴에 많은 고민은? (Our Secret Story: What Do Teens Worry About?)," *Female Students*, September 1977, 298–301.

The aforementioned dialogue illustrates that for women, the insertion of tampons into their vaginas was a challenging, if not painful, process, particularly during their initial attempts. As the physicians observed, some women were unsuccessful in their attempts.

The aforementioned article, entitled "*Menstrual Pad Waste,*" also conveyed Korean women's complaints about the unusual and complex actions demanded from tampons. In response to questions regarding experiences with tampon use, some women "who had used the tampon at least once" stated that they ceased using them due to "pain." Some of them indicated that they discontinued tampon use due to an "aversion" to the idea that "something goes in and out of the interior of the body," while others expressed concern that the tampon "would hurt the hymen."[119]

Additionally, both articles demonstrate that the concern about tampon use potentially damaging the hymen significantly influenced technological decisions associated with menstruation, as Bark-Yi Eun-sil and Noah Ji-eun argue. In the discussion between the four students and the physician, the term "young age" alluded to this concern. This issue was also explicitly addressed in the aforementioned survey. It is noteworthy that a comparable concern existed in the United States, where Puritan values emphasizing chastity until the mid-twentieth century made American women hesitant about adopting tampons. Nevertheless, in the United States, tampons gained popularity in the 1940s and, by 1978, had achieved a market share comparable to that of sanitary pads. What factors then account for the disparate acceptance rates of the same menstrual technology in two societies with similarly conservative views on women's sexuality?

An examination of the conditions provides insight into the ways that women users and experts mutually shaped preferences regarding tampons and further feminine technology. In the United States, by the 1940s, an increasing number of American women began to use tampons. Although American women also encountered difficulties in using the unfamiliar and intricate menstrual device, they were drawn to the possibility allowed by the tampon, which the sanitary pad did not allow. At that time, for women who were compelled to attach sanitary pads with pins or belts, the experience of dealing with menstrual blood was described as "that whole, horrible thing." Meanwhile, the tenet of "cleanness of the body" gave rise to "a fearful, bashful preoccupation with their [American] natural odors," to borrow Vincent Vinikas' word.[120] The catchphrase "no belts, no pins, no pads, no odor" in Tampax tampon advertisements from the 1930s to the 1940s reflects contemporary women's complaints about sanitary pads and concerns about the odor, as well as the strategies of tampon

[119] Ko To-wŏn, "'Menstrual Pads Wastes'," 104.

[120] Vincent Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell: American Hygiene in an Age of Advertisement* (Iowa State Press, 1992), 95.

manufacturers addressing those concerns.[121] As a result, an increasing number of women who were reluctant to use sanitary pads began to use tampons. They eventually discovered the correct insertion techniques for this device into the vagina through a process of trial and error.[122]

As the use of tampons by women became more prevalent, they sought the advice of medical professionals regarding the efficacy and potential risks associated with this new menstrual technology. This prompted medical experts to discuss related issues and produce knowledge pertaining to tampons. Among these experts, Robert Dickenson is noteworthy for his role in initiating "a turning point" in tampon use. In 1945, Dickenson, an OB/GYN, editor and author of textbooks and illustrative handbooks, and secretary of the National Committee on Maternal Health, published an article. In the article published in *the Journal of the American Medical Association*, he asserted that tampons were innocuous to the hymen.[123] He wrote that the hymen "can become as tolerant as the mucous lining of the mouth and its lips," and that "the most unentered hymens admit the average lubricated examining male forefinger for two joints, or female index entire, the circle having a medical diameter of an inch (2.5cm)." Presenting illustrations of the vaginal opening and various tampon sizes, he concluded, "Thus, the tampon has a caliber that does not impair standard anatomic virginity."[124] In 1949, the influential magazine *Consumer Reports* cited his opinion in an article titled "Sanitary Pads and Tampons." Since then, not only tampon manufacturers but also health columnists have cited the physician's opinion in sex education pamphlets and columns, providing reassurance to adolescents and single women who felt anxious about using a tampon in the name of medicine.[125]

When manufacturers in South Korea released the tampon in the late 1970s, they were already aware that it would elicit similar concerns and included phrases related to the hymen even in their initial advertisements, emulating the rhetoric employed by their American counterparts. In an advertisement for the Amore tampon, Pacific Chemical asserted, "A pinky-sized tampon would not damage the hymen."[126]

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[121] Tampax, Tampax Inc., advertisement, *New York Mirror*, 1938. in Ad*Access On-Line Project-Ad #BH0171, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, <https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4tt4gd0g> [accessed, 15 October 2022]

[122] Freidenfelds, *The Modern Period,* 185.

[123] Freidenfelds, *The Modern Period,* 174.

[124] Robert Latou Dickinson, "Tampons as Menstrual Guards," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 128.7 (1945), 492.

[125] For the popularity, general debates of the relationship between the tampon and women's sexuality, and the "turning point" in tampon use in the United States, see Freidenfelds, *The Modern Period,* 170–92.

[126] Amore Tampon, Pacific Chemical, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 8 February 1978.

Dong-A Pharmaceutical, the manufacturer of Tempo, sought to address these concerns by engaging medical authorities more actively. An advertisement for Tempo in the 1977 issue of the teen magazine *Female Students* provides an illustrative example of such efforts. In contrast to the majority of photographic advertisements in the magazine, this monochromatic advertisement, entitled "Information for Everyday Life: A Way for Periods without Menstrual Pads!" conveyed information about menstruation and the tampon. The quasi-article juxtaposed the discomfort accompanied by the use of cloth pads and disposable menstrual pads with the comfort resulting from that of tampons. The advertisement asserted that Tempo could alleviate concerns regarding the potential for a "specific odor" to be revealed due to its ability to absorb menstrual blood before it is released and subsequently stains fabrics. The advertisement also emphasized that Tempo allowed women to swim during menstruation, a capability that disposable menstrual pads do not offer. The article-cum-advertisement concluded with a question-and-answer session addressing concerns about the hymen and the reliability of the tampon.

> *Question: Can single women use [tampons]?*
>
> *Answer: The question seems to come from a concern related to the hymen. The hymen is not a closed membrane; rather it has an opening in the middle that allows menstrual blood to flow out. The hymen is a highly elastic crease [*churŭm*]. If it were closed, how could menstrual blood flow out? The tampon is small enough to pass through the opening of the hymen, and thus, you don't need to worry about whether it will hurt the hymen at all. In other words, while the diameter of the opening of the hymen is about 2 cm, that of the Tempo tampon is just 1 cm, which will not damage [the hymen].*

The answer provided by the "medical office" of Dong-A Pharmaceutical was largely consistent with the explanation written by Robert Dickinson, invoking the authority of a medical professional. At the edge of the page, a "coupon for counseling [*sangdamgwŏn*]" was printed, promising free samples to those who send the coupon, as was common practice with conventional product coupons.[127] Throughout the late 1970s, Dong-A Pharmaceutical reiterated this abridged explanation in its subsequent advertisements.

[127] Tempo, Dong-A Pharmaceutical, advertisement, *Female Students*, July 1977.

*Tempo tampon with a device for insertion [*sabipki*] allows even first-time users to insert it into the right position in the vagina and does not affect the hymen. So single women can also use it without any concern.*[128]

While tampon manufacturers sought to refute the concern that tampons might cause damage to the hymen, physicians offered opinions on the matter that were vague and, at times, contradictory. Indeed, the issue was not given due consideration within the South Korean medical community. Nevertheless, they offered their perspectives on the relationship between the tampon and the hymen in articles on menstruation in sex education, and medical advice in teen magazines such as *Female Students* in the late 1970s and the mid-1980s. This contributed to the formation of women' ideas on the matter. In his article entitled "The First Step toward Maturity: The Menarche," physician Yi Jun-hwan at Koryŏ Hospital recommended the use of tampons for swimming or other necessary activities, although he did not offer any opinion on the matter of the hymen.[129] In his article titled "Menarche Comes Earlier," OB/GYN and professor at Catholic Medical College No Yŏng-ch'ŏl also did not explicitly address the concern, but he did imply a potential relationship between the tampon and the hymen. He stated, "It is awkward [*kollanhan*] for single women without any sexual experiences or since menarche to use tampons."[130]

In an advice column in which the aforementioned reader "Yŏng" posed a question, Kim U-kyun, an OB/GYN at Sŏngsim Hospital, provided a response that was favorable but vague regarding the use of tampons:

Q: "Could using Tempo [tampons] damage the hymen?"[131]

I am a middle school student using Tempo, the insertion-style menstrual product. A few days ago, one of my friends said that misusing Tempo can damage the hymen. If the hymen is damaged, what happens? Could it hinder giving birth to a child in the future? Please give me a precise answer.

-from Yŏng

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[128] Tempo, Dong-A Pharmaceutical, advertisement, *Female Students*, September 1978; *Women Donga*, October 1978.

[129] Yi Jun-hwan 李俊煥, "Sŏngsugeŭi ch'ŏt paljauk ch'ojo 성숙에의 첫 발자욱 초조 (The First Step Toward Maturity: The Menarche)," *Female Students,* December 1978, 142–7.

[130] No Yŏng-ch'ŏl 노영철, "Ch'ogyŏngi ppallajyŏ kanda 초경이 빨라져 간다 (Menarche Comes Earlier)," *Female Students*, June 1980, 336–41.

[131] By the mid-1980s, Tempo was used as a generic term for all tampons, just as Kleenex of Kimberly & Clark is used to remark a tissue.

A: It doesn't affect pregnancy or delivery at all.

Dear Miss Yŏng,

*The hymen is a small wrinkle that separates the vagina from the vestibule [*chiljŏngjŏn*], which has an opening in it. This is where menstrual blood flows out every month. The hymen often ruptures during the first sexual intercourse, but sometimes strenuous exercise, medical examinations, surgery, or masturbation can also cause it to rupture. However, considering that the average size of the vaginal opening is larger than that of Tempo, it seems unlikely that Tempo would cause a hymen rupture. If it were so fragile, who would use insertion-type menstrual products, and what companies would manufacture such products? Even if the hymen ruptures, I'd like to say that it is just a rupture, and it will never hinder sexual intercourse, pregnancy, or delivery.*[132]

The physician argued that the use of tampons would inflict minimal damage to the hymen, citing the hymen's anatomical characteristic and the smaller diameter of the Tempo in comparison to the vaginal opening, as the prominent American physician Dickinson did. At the same time, he asserted that the damage to the hymen has no impact on sexual intercourse, pregnancy, or delivery. How did the reader nicknamed "Yŏng," and other Korean women respond to the different medical opinions on the relationship between the tampon and hymen? It can be assumed that Kim's answer may not have been particularly reassuring to women who believed that maintaining their hymen intact before marriage was important.

However, the experiences of the women whom I interviewed indicate that Korean women's reluctance to use tampons was not solely attributable to the aforementioned concern. In the 1980s, during her tenure as a high school student, An Min-ja was introduced to tampons by a friend who was an athlete and a tampon user. Nevertheless, this did not result in her usage of tampons. She had never contemplated the use of tampons due to her perception that "Asians" "are different from foreigners who engage in sexual relationships at an early age." Furthermore, she exhibited a strong aversion to any forms of "inserting anything into [her body]." She had heard rumors at school that "if tampons were not managed properly, they could result in infection and a visit to the doctor," although she was unaware of the specific risks associated with TSS. From her perspective, her friend's tampon use was "unavoidable" due to her participation in sports.[133] Similarly, Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng initially learned about tampons from her peers during a summer retreat at her middle school in the early 1980s, which included a swimming program. Some friends used tampons during swimming activities, and shared

[132] "A Counseling Office," *Female Students*, October 1985, 328.

[133] An Min-ja, interview.

their experiences with friends. The girls discussed "how to use tampons," "how difficult it was [to use tampons]" and "how they would manage their menstruation when traveling." In her high school, such conversations were common well among her friends. In addition to their own experiences, Kim and her friends frequently discussed the unreliability of tampons, citing rumors such as that "some women had been compelled to visit a hospital to have a tampon removed after they had failed to find a string [attached to an absorber]."[134]

Natural Menstruation but Vulnerable Menstruating Bodies

These experiences of adolescents illustrate that they began to share their experiences and rumors related to new menstrual technology with friends and inquire about the potential for tampons to damage the hymen. While this indicates the influence of the continuing expectation of women's physical chastity, at the same time, it also suggests a rupture with the long-standing idea that menstruation should be concealed by simply hiding menstrual blood, which emerged in the late 1970s. The selection of menstrual technology and its utilization have transcended the mere concealment of menstrual blood from the gaze of others. Female students began to perceive menstruation as a significant bodily experience with the potential to influence their future roles as mothers. Consequently, they began to seek guidance on how to manage their menstruation effectively, disclosing their menstrual experiences to friends or through the medium of teen magazines. The letter from the reader, identified as "Yŏng," who sought advice on the potential relationship between the tampon, the hymen, and future pregnancy, reflected the change. By the 1980s, a greater number of female readers of teen magazines were seeking information about menstruation and the management of their menstruating bodies. They sought advice on these questions: What the best menstrual technology was; what they should or should not do during their periods; why their menarche had not yet begun; why their periods were irregular; and whether certain menstrual conditions would cause difficulty in conceiving in the future.[135]

The change was, in part, attributable to the implementation of sex education in schools. It should be noted that this observation does not pertain to the success of the sex education program announced by the government in 1968. Rather, the reason was the substandard quality of the school-based sex education program. By the 1970s, female students learned about menstruation in school, but they soon discerned that the sex education they were receiving was superficial. Han Ji-suk recalled

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[134] Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng, interview.

[135] "A Counseling Office," *Female Students,* 1976 July, 207; *Female Students*, 1982 August, 340.

that the only class that "could be considered sex education" was nothing but a discussion of "male and female genitals," "the menstruation cycle," and "pregnancy" in her home economics class (*kajŏng*).[136] Yi Mi-kyŏng also stated that her home economics teacher in middle school merely informed them that they would soon experience menarche. As a result, when she did so, she sought assistance from her elder sister.[137]

In addition to female siblings and friends, manufacturers in the increasingly competitive market for menstrual products assumed the role of informants about menstruation. In lieu of schoolteachers, the manufacturers' promoters-cum-lecturers provided sex education, including product promotions, with the approval of the school authorities. The lecturers and promoters met with a diverse range of female audiences, including students, housewives, and female factory workers who had not advanced beyond elementary school. In the late 1970s, Dong-A Pharmaceutical, the manufacturer of Tempo, dispatched promoters to female high schools, nursing colleges, gatherings at the YMCA, and Women's Centers (*yŏsŏnghoegwan*).[138] In 1982, the daily newspaper *Maeil Economy* reported that Yuhan Kimberly had conducted educational sessions on the appropriate use of their products and hygiene precautions in female middle and high schools and workplaces for approximately thirty thousand women annually.[139]

It is crucial to acknowledge that this approach to sex education was also a response to the increasing necessity for such education within society. In an article published in *The 1978 Dong-a Ilbo* titled "Chastity Education, Who and How to Teach It?" journalist Yi Si-hŏn reported that education experts and parents alike concurred on the necessity of sex education. The question of whether sex education should be provided was no longer a source of contention.[140] Like manufacturers, publishers recognized the necessity for sex education. In the 1980s, numerous sex education books were published, catering to a diverse audience, including parents, adolescents, and elementary school students.[141]

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[136] Han Ji-suk, interview.

[137] Yi Mi-kyŏng, interviewed by the author, 2021.

[138] Chang Sŏk-chin, "A Study on Marketing Feminine Hygiene Product," 65–7.

[139] Ham Sŭng-yong 함성용, "Sobijawa hamkke: yuhank'imbŏlli 소비자와 함께: 유한킴벌리 (With Consumers: Yuhan Kimberly)," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 29 March 1982.

[140] Yi Si-hŏn 이시헌, "Sun'gyŏlgyoyuk, nuga ŏttŏk'e karŭch'il kŏsin'ga 순결教育 누가 어떻게 가르칠 것인가? (Chastity Education, Who and How to Teach It?)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 21 August 1978.

[141] To name a few of sex education book in the 1980s, Pak Ki-ha 박기하, *Chŏlmŭn sam sogesŏ 젊은 삶 속에서 (In the Middle of Young Lives)* (Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea, PPFK], 1983); Yi Won-gu 이원구, *Sochunghan uridŭl 소중한*

Teen magazines also served as a new conduit for menstrual knowledge, reflecting the increasing demand for sex education. They played an active role in the reproduction and dissemination of menstrual knowledge. It is, however, of greater significance to note that they were not merely informative sources. They became a reliable source of guidance for girls who felt that the school-based sex education programs were inadequate for addressing their concerns related to their menstruating bodies. Such characteristics had already appeared in the late 1970s. In 1978, a middle school student reader of *Female Students* inquired, "I learned about menstruation in home economics class, but I am still just afraid of and nervous. How should I behave during menstruation?"[142] In addition to responding to readers' inquiries, teen magazines frequently featured articles related to sexual education. These articles provided concrete information on menstruation, such as practical guidance on how to select and use menstrual products.

An analysis of the content of the magazine *Female Students* provides insight into the evolving idea of menstruation and the menstruating body throughout the 1970s and 1980s. At first glance, the content of teen magazines published in the late 1970s appeared to reiterate the same knowledge previously conveyed in women's magazines and official sex-education guides for schoolteachers a decade earlier. For example, in the article titled "Menarche Comes Earlier" mentioned above in 1980, the author, physician No Yŏng-ch'ŏl, reiterated the explanation of menstruation found in *Plan and Practice* in 1968. His explanation was, in fact, even more conservative and sexist than the book published a decade earlier.

> *Menstruation is something women should experience, not something embarrassing. It's just a starting point for being an adult. It's like the budding of flowers. As plants are at their most beautiful in the middle of fruit preparation, humans are at their youngest during their fertile years, from menarche to menopause—the end of menstruation.*

At the same time, while asserting that "life during menstruation is much the same as usual," he emphasized specific methods for managing menstruating bodies: "keeping body and mind clean"; "remaining calm mentally and physically"; avoiding "riding a bike or swimming." These recommendations were consistent with the perspectives of physicians and education experts from the 1970s, who viewed menstruation as a natural process but considered menstruating bodies to be

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우리들 (We are Precious) (Dongjinmunhwasa, 1984); Yashima Hideo 矢島映夫, *Pumoga alayahal sŏnggyoyuk 부모가 알아야 할 성교육 (Sex Education that Parents Should Know), trans.* by Pak Che-sŏng (Koko Inc., 1984).

[142] "A Counseling Office," *Female Students*, June 1978, 232.

vulnerable.[143] An article published in the same magazine in 1983 by an unidentified author echoed these sentiments.

> *If we compare a woman to a store, menstruation can be seen as the decision to close the store because the long-awaited customer, the sperm, did not arrive that month.*

The author recommended "light exercises that can relieve the tension in the body and mind," but advised against strenuous exercise. "Competitive sport [such as tennis] that produce adrenalin and can destroy red blood cells, causing anemia, or in the most extreme cases, like Olympic athletes, lead to a small breast due to the deadening of ovary function."

It is notable, however, that the article in question represents a departure from the advice provided by No in the 1970s and the explanation of menstruation offered by the authors of *Plan and Practice* in the 1960s. First, the article did not seek to persuade women that menstruation is not an embarrassing phenomenon that should be concealed. This aligns with the fact that women had come to perceive menstruation as a *natural* bodily event that they would discuss their experiences, information, and technologies associated with menstruation among friends and in magazines through readers' letters. Second, the article provided guidance on vaginal conditions that the aforementioned experts had not mentioned.

> *In the past, bathing during a period was a taboo. This is because during a period the vagina is congested with blood and defenseless against various germs, which can allow germs to adhere. However, Western-style bathing, which replaces the water for each bath, has no risk of germs, and even a shower that would refresh the mood is effective. In those cases, be sure to thoroughly wash your vulva, from front to back, especially the frilly [*churŭmjin*] parts, especially carefully. [emphasis mine]*[144]

The explanation regarding the susceptible vagina to bacterial infection during menstruation has been a pervasive theme in practical menstrual guidance for female adolescents since the early 1980s, as will be discussed again in Chapter 5. In an article titled "Neat Female Students' Know-How for Menstruation," published in a 1981 issue of *Female Students*, an unidentified author wrote, "During menstruation, the interior vagina becomes the softest state and is consequently susceptible to infection." Accordingly, the author advised replacing "hygienic" disposable menstrual pads

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[143] No Yŏng-ch'ŏl, "Menarche Comes Earlier," 336–41.

[144] "Yŏhaksaeng sun'gyŏlgyosil: wŏlgyŏng, kŭnarŭl wihae ara duseyo 여학생 순결교실: 월경, 그날을 위해 알아 두세요 (Chastity Class for Female Students: Menstruation, What You Need to Know for the Day)," *Female Students*, December 1983, 274–9.

"frequently." In a similar vein, the author recommended bathing frequently in water that is "neither too hot nor too cold" to maintain "cleanliness," while discouraging "getting into the bathtub in public bath" to prevent the risk of "bacterial infection."[145] An article published in the same magazine in 1984, titled "Chastity Class for Female Students: Menstruation, Having Even the Day Happily" conveyed a comparable notion regarding the vulnerability of the reproductive organ during menstruation.

> *Is bathing during a period good or bad? The bottom line is that just showering is very good. During a period, when the resistance of the uterus is weakened, invasion of various germs [*chapkyun*] could easily lead to infection. Thus, it is better not to go to a public bath, although it is bad for the skin as well as the mood. But, if you use a bathtub at home, you don't need to worry about germs. A bath will warm your body and improve blood circulation and your mood. A shower will help prevent the invasion of various germs. Washing external genitalia [*kukpu, *局部 *] with lukewarm water is advisable. But do not use soap [when washing the genitals] because it could make the sensitive skin [on a period] sore. [emphasis mine]*[146]

The mention of infection during menstruation reminds us of the potential risk of TSS associated with the use of tampons. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine whether the author intended to imply TSS, which emerged as a concern in the United States around 1980, given that the reference to a vagina being susceptible to infection had already appeared in the magazine in 1978. In an article titled "Encyclopedia for Summer Life," an unidentified author advised against bathing during menstruation on the grounds that it "could increase the possibility of germ invasion."[147] Furthermore, when the TSS issue was featured on the front pages of American newspapers, South Korean newspapers reported the news as an isolated incident in a foreign country, rather than as a pertinent and grave matter for South Korean tampon users.[148] In 1989, the first reported case of TSS in Korea, allegedly caused by tampon use, was published in a Korean medical journal. However, no major

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[145] "Kkalkkŭmhan yŏhaksaengŭi saengniil chihye 깔끔한 여학생의 생리일 지혜 (Neat Female Students' Know-How for Menstruation)," *Female Students*, May 1981, 242–3.

[146] "Yŏhaksaeng sun'gyŏlgyosil: saengni, kŭnaldo chŭlgŏpke ponaeseyo 여학생 순결교실:생리, 그날도 즐겁게 보내세요 (Chastity Class for Female Students: Menstruation, Having Even the Day Happily)," *Female Students*, April 1984, 268–73.

[147] "Yŏrŭmsari paekkwa 여름살이 백과 (Encyclopedia for Summer Life)," *Female Students*, August 1978, 368–9.

[148] Richard Severo, "Rely Tampon Recalled by Maker; Linked to Toxic Shock Syndrome; Refunds Are Offered Rely Brand Tampons Recalled Advice on Reducing Risk Data Called 'Limited'," *New York Times*, 23 September 1980; "Sabibyong saengnidae 「t'aemp'on」ŭn yuhae, miguk pangyŏk sent'ŏ palp'yo 삽입용 生理帶「탬폰」은 有害, 美國 防疫센터發表 (The CDC Announced that Menstrual Tampons are Harmful)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 13 October 1980.

Korean newspaper reported on it.[149] Nevertheless, it is evident that the idea of the vulnerability of female genitals to infection during menstruation has persisted among female adolescents since the early 1980s. Women whom I interviewed recalled being informed about tampon-related "diseases" or "inflammation" during their high school years in the 1980s.[150]

The attitudes of female adolescents toward exercising during menstruation in the mid- and late 1980s provide an illustrative example of how they interpreted such new knowledge about menstruation and their menstruating bodies. A study conducted in 1986 indicates that a considerable number of female students were disinclined to engage in physical exercise during menstruation. The study's author, Sŏng Chu-hwan, conducted a survey of 830 students from five girls' high schools in Gyeonggi Province, inquiring regarding their attitudes toward physical education classes during menstruation. The findings indicated that 57% of respondents expressed a negative attitude toward gym class during menstruation, while only 10% expressed a positive attitude. Moreover, 81% of respondents indicated a preference to refrain from participating in gym class, citing stomach, back pain, or headaches as their reasons for doing so. In addition, despite the author's own negative view of students' general aversion to gym class and his recommendation of "proper" exercise during menstruation, he advised against bathing and swimming, which could cause "infection easily."[151]

The experiences of women resonated with the aversion to exercise during menstruation among educators and female students. Cho Kyŏng-mi recalled that when she was a student at a girls' high school in the mid-1980s, teachers inquired as to whether any students were menstruating and if so, excused them from gym class.[152] Han Ji-suk stated that during her tenure as a high school student in the early 1980s, she and her peers would circumvent gym class by just saying, "I am sick," which "led teachers to recognize [our] menstruation."[153] Similarly, Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng recalled that she and her friends avoided gym class on the pretext of illness during their menstrual period when she was a student in the mid-1980s. It is noteworthy that Kim and her friends "never" employed the pretext of illness to circumvent physical exercise during their own menstruation. For them, it was too

[149] Pak Mun-il 박문일 et al., "Toksŏng syok'ŭjŭnghugun 1rye 독성 쇼크증후군 1 례 (A Case of Toxic Shock Syndrome)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 32.4 (1989): 582–85.

[150] Han Ji-suk; An Min-ja; Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng, interview.

[151] Sŏng Chu-hwan 成周煥, "Yŏgosaengŭi saengni mit ch'eyuksuŏp kip'ihyŏnsange kwanhan yŏn'gu 女高生의 生理 및 體育授業 忌避現狀에 관한 硏究 (A Study on Female Students' Menstruation and Their Aversion to Gym Class)," *Kyoyungnonch'ong* 6 (1986): 151–72.

[152] Cho Kyŏng-mi, interview.

[153] Han Ji-suk, interview.

embarrassing to inform teachers of the fact that they themselves were menstruating. Consequently, on behalf of the girl on her period, her friends requested an excuse for her exemption from gym class.[154]

Since the early 1980s, female adolescents have been less reluctant to speak about menstruation with their female friends or in teen magazines than their counterparts in the 1970s. For them, menstruation is a natural biological event, and the management of this natural event has become a significant aspect of their lives. They were ashamed to discuss their periods in public, but if they felt it was necessary, they disclosed that they were menstruating with help from their friends. In this context, speaking of illness, albeit a pretext, and requesting exemptions from gym class due to menstruation were new collective efforts. These actions represented alternative strategies for managing menstruation, which were perceived as incompatible with gym class.

Another alternative to managing their menstruation was to regulate their menstrual cycles by using oral contraceptive pills. According to a survey of female students' use of oral contraceptive pills in 1977, among "530 high school female students in Busan City," 22% answered that they had taken oral contraceptive pills more than once to control their menstrual cycle. They learned that they could control their menstrual cycle using the pill not only from nursing teachers, parents, pharmacists, and physicians but also from their sisters and friends.[155]

It is noteworthy that South Korean women had greater access to oral contraceptive pills than their counterparts in the West. In contrast to the situation in many American and European countries, where women seeking oral contraceptive pills were required to visit a physician and obtain a prescription, Korean women were able to obtain contraceptive medication with relative ease since the 1960s. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, the Korean government implemented a population policy with the objective of reducing population growth. This initiative, designated the National Family Planning Program, permitted women to procure contraceptive medication from pharmacies or obtain it from health centers without a prescription. It is also important to note that the majority of respondents expected some degree of side effects from the contraceptive pill. Among the respondents who had tried oral pills, 74% reported experiencing worry or fear regarding potential side effects. Indeed, 57% of the respondents reported experiencing "a dull feeling in the head" and

[154] Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng, interview.

[155] Kim In-soon 김인순, "Pusanjibang yŏgosaengŭi p'iimje pogyonge kwanhan yŏn'gu 부산지방 여고생의 피임제 복용에 관한 연구 (A Study on the Use of Oral Contraceptives by High School Girls in Busan Area)," *Chungangŭihak* 32. 6 (1977): 641–47.

41% reported "a feeling of indigestion." Nevertheless, half of those who used the oral contraceptive pill indicated that they would use the method again. In this sense, for young Korean women, the oral contraceptive pill that allowed them to transform their vulnerable menstruating bodies into non-menstruating bodies was one of the alternative menstrual technologies, and the demands and requests of the menstrual technology were acceptable.

Some women's experiences reflected this alternative use of oral contraceptive pills as menstrual technology. Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng recalled learning this in high school during the early 1980s. At that time, several of her classmates used oral pills to delay the onset of menstruation, although she herself did not employ the method at that time.[156] Some girls were sufficiently bold as to visit public health centers to obtain the pills. According to an article titled "Abuse of Contraceptive Medicine" in *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* in 1977, an official of a public health center in Chungcheong Province was visited by two girls who wanted to get oral contraceptive pills. Suspecting their sexual activity, the official inquired about their reason for wanting the pills. The girls answered without embarrassment, as follows.

> *We haven't done anything wrong. We're going to travel tomorrow, but unfortunately, our periods are about to start. We don't want menstruation to ruin our trip, so we just want to control our periods with contraceptive medicine.*[157]

Similar to the female students in the study conducted by Kim In-soon, the two girls were neither promiscuous nor extraordinary, although they may have misinterpreted how the hormonal contraceptive tablet works. Menstruation, defined as the shedding of the uterine lining, occurs, when an ovum (egg) from the ovary is not fertilized by a sperm. Therefore, the hormonal contraceptive pill functions by inhibiting ovulation, thereby preventing pregnancy and menstruation. Based on this mechanism, if the girls had taken oral contraceptive pills to regulate imminent menstruation, their efforts would have been futile. However, at least their actions demonstrate that female adolescents were aware of the oral contraceptive pill's ability to regulate menstrual cycles. More importantly, they represented a new generation who openly discussed menstruation and who managed their menstruation by using or seemingly "abusing" oral contraceptive pills in cooperation with their female peers.

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[156] Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng, interview.

[157] "Namyongdoenŭn p'iimyak 남용되는 피임약 (Abuse of Contraceptive Medicine)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 17 August 1977.

It is important to note that, similar to Kim Hyŏn-kyŏng, some women rejected the alternative use of contraceptive pills. Han Ji-suk considered oral contraceptive pills an affront to natural menstruation and thus did not use them prior to her marriage.[158] Yi Mi-kyŏng did not perceive the necessity of managing her menstruating body with medication, given that the quantity of her menstrual blood was "initially too small" and did not impede her daily activities.[159] For both women, the demands and requests of oral contraceptive pills as an alternative menstrual technology were not only unacceptable but also unnecessary.

Until the mid-1970s, most Korean women used homemade menstrual pads to deal with their menstrual blood. The technology allowed women to deal with menstrual blood and provided the first, and sometimes only, opportunity to share what they knew about this intimate bodily event among female family members. At the same time, due to the pervasive idea that menstruation should be hidden, the technology demanded a series of actions from women to conceal it; when they used, washed, and dried them, even their mothers and sisters would not know. While disposable menstrual pads had been advertised and sold since the mid-1960s, most Korean women considered them portable but unreliable devices. They used disposable menstrual pads when they enjoyed spending time away from home.

As an increasing number of women pursued education and employment, they began to venture beyond the domestic sphere, thereby bringing their bodies into the public domain. This shift resulted in the gradual acceptance of disposable menstrual pads as a necessity, rather than as a substitute for homemade pads. For female students and workers, disposable menstrual pads allowed them to change pads easily, even if the technology was not perfect, vis-à-vis cloth menstrual pads made by themselves, their mothers, or their grandmothers. Such shifts in the physical location of women were accompanied by concomitant changes in their social roles. In the late 1960s, the government began to consider female adolescents as future mothers in different ways than in the past. Female students were now expected to fulfill the role of complementary reproducers within the domestic sphere, providing support for the men who would become industrial warriors. The government's decision facilitated the production of menstrual knowledge and the establishment of a gendered education system in which female students would gain a new understanding of menstruation. This knowledge

[158] Han Ji-suk, interview.

[159] Yi Mi-kyŏng, interview.

included the understanding that menstruation is a normal and natural biological event in a woman's reproductive life cycle and the ways in which a menstruating body should be managed differently than a non-menstruating body.

Nevertheless, the topic of sex education remained a source of discomfort and controversy, and menstruation continued to be a subject that was shrouded in secrecy and regarded as an embarrassing topic that women were unable to discuss openly. Thus, users of the new disposable menstrual pad were compelled to respond to requests that arose not only from the discrepancy between the manufactured, identical product and individual bodies but also from social demands to conceal menstruation and menstrual pads. In responding to these requests, users devised their own techniques to modify disposable menstrual pads that often failed to absorb their menstrual blood. These techniques included purchasing the product and discarding it in ways that did not attract public attention.

In the 1970s and 1980s, disposable menstrual pads gradually replaced homemade menstrual pads, and another disposable menstrual product, the tampon, was introduced into the expanding market of menstrual products. Tampon manufacturers anticipated that the advent of new menstrual technology would appeal to Korean women, even if it would not replace disposable menstrual pads, but their efforts proved unsuccessful. It was not only due to the concern that the "insertion-style menstrual device" might damage their chastity, symbolized by the hymen, but also due to the intricate actions demanded by the material technology, new medical ideas regarding the natural but vulnerable menstruating body, and the perceived susceptibility of the vagina to infection.

Since the late 1970s, adolescent girls have been provided with information and guidance on menstruation through teen magazines. The management of menstruating bodies has constituted a recurring topic. By the mid-1980s, magazine articles ceased to attempt to assuage female adolescents' concerns by reiterating the normalcy and naturalness of menstruation. Such concerns had become widespread enough that it was no longer necessary to state them explicitly. Magazines aimed at adolescent girls conveyed how to manage vulnerable menstruating bodies and the susceptibility of the vagina to infection during menstruation, thereby challenging the taboo that menstruation should not be discussed. Female students shared their knowledge of menstrual management and their menstrual experiences with their friends.

It is therefore unsurprising that the majority of adolescents and young women, who regarded menstruation as natural but considered their menstruating bodies vulnerable and susceptible to infection, rejected tampons. The unconventional menstrual technology demanded not only intricate actions from the users to correctly insert it into the vagina, which is not visible to them, but also the overcoming of multiple concerns regarding the insertion of something that could potentially damage

their chastity and their general and reproductive health into their vulnerable menstruating bodies and vaginas. For them, the demands and requests of the technology were not acceptable.

However, this does not imply that female students were docile followers who blindly obeyed every instruction as a tenet of menstrual management. Rather, for female students and adolescents, the instructions were one of the references for managing their periods and their lives among various references. It is notable that, despite the pervasive concerns surrounding the use of tampons, some women continued to use them. Notwithstanding the counsel of educational and health experts regarding the "proper or usual activities during menstruation," a considerable number of female students asserted that their menstruating bodies were incompatible with gym class or swimming during school retreats, thereby avoiding exercise during menstruation under the pretext of "being ill." Despite reservations about their sexual morality and indulgence, they occasionally took oral contraceptive pills to regulate their menstrual cycle without embarrassment. Beyond the guidance on menstrual products and menstruating bodies, women used not only menstrual technology but also alternatives, sharing their experiences and voices with other women who possessed menstruating bodies, thereby relying on solidarity among them.

Accepting the concepts of the technology's affordance and mechanisms, this chapter examined what individual menstrual technologies requested and demanded from and allowed their users. The findings indicate that women's responses to these requests and demands extended beyond a mere acceptance or rejection. These responses include devising techniques to fit the technology to their material bodies and collaborating with their friends. Simultaneously, this chapter demonstrated that the requests and demands of menstrual technologies varied in accordance with the sociocultural transitions in which women were situated and how women responded to these shifts. In this way, the chapter revealed that women engaged with technologies associated with their menstruation to determine which technology fits their bodies, and conceived techniques and alternatives to fit the technology to their different bodies that were situated in various sociocultural conditions. This was also how women engaged with contraceptive technologies, as will be illustrated in Chapter 4.

4. Contraceptive Technologies and Making the Ideal Family

In the fall of 2021, I traveled to a small city 200 kilometers away from Seoul to meet Yi Mi-kyŏng and listen to her experiences related to what this dissertation discusses. Born in 1961, she completed high school, got married in her twenties, and became a housewife. She gave birth to her two sons in 1989 and 1992, respectively. She used a contraceptive method to space the births of her two children. Following the birth of her second son, she resumed using contraception. As she and her husband decided not to have any more children, she continued to use contraception. All of this was not so different from what I had anticipated based on the literature on the South Korean history of contraception, or, more precisely, of the national family planning program (hereafter FPP).

However, as she proceeded to describe her experience related to contraceptive technology in detail, it became evident that her experience challenges the conventional narratives as presented in the literature. I had surmised that she used intrauterine devices (IUDs), oral contraceptive pills, laparoscopic or postpartum tubal ligations, or her husband's vasectomy, which the government actively promoted. By the 1988, 88% of the couples in the country were using these contraceptives.[1] However, despite confirming that several people around her opted for those contraceptives at that time, she stated that she and her husband exclusively used condoms. When asked whether she considered the aforementioned female contraceptive methods, she responded:

> *Other methods…my husband suggested [them]. But I said that women could not even practice contraception. (…) [I said that] I could not do that either. And I've also heard that people got sick or got bad more frequently after the loop [IUD] was inserted.*[2]

Her story illustrates that the contraceptive experiences of South Korean women were more varied than previously documented in histories of contraceptive technology, with a focus on the FPP and so-

[1] Department of Economic and Social Affairs in Population Division at United Nations, "World Contraceptive Use 2020," (United Nations, 2020).

[2] In South Korea during the late 20th century, following the introduction of the Lippes loop and subsequent replacement of this by the T-shaped IUD called the Copper-T (*k'ap'ŏt'i*), the term "loop" was used to refer to IUDs regardless of their specific type.

called modern technology and its development. At the same time, her technological choice suggests diverse ways that women users exercise their agency. Instead of accepting the new contraceptive technologies endorsed by the government, she compared the co-existing old and new contraceptives. After considering their impact on her body, she decided not to use the modern female contraceptive options, relegating the responsibility for contraception to her partner. This chapter investigates the very ways in which Korean women, particularly married ones, chose contraceptive technologies suitable for their bodies within the sociocultural context in which they were situated. It also examines how they engaged with these technologies between 1945 and the early 1990s. The technologies ranged from sophisticated contraceptive technologies to seemingly old-fashioned methods such as condoms.

While even historians of technology rarely discussed feminine technologies, contraceptive technology was an exception. By the 1970s, scholars from various disciplines—including history, sociology, demography, and feminism—began to examine the technology. They postulated that contraceptive technology was a significant factor in social change, liberating women from the burden of birth control. In their technological determinism and progressive perspective on history, the oral contraceptive pill was represented as the scientific and technological accomplishment that rescued women— "the victims of their own fecundity."[3]

However, since the 1970s, feminist scholars have adopted a more critical stance toward contraceptive technology. In 1976, Linda Gordon published *Woman's Body, Woman's Right*, in which she questioned the assumption that the advent of modern contraceptive technology had emancipated women by providing reliable contraceptive measures and inaugurating such critiques of the neutrality of technology. Gordon notes that women have controlled their fertility for millennia using methods not considered modern. She argues that the development of modern contraceptive technologies was a result of social and institutional shifts, such as the rise of population control ideology in the twentieth century.[4] Similarly, Elkie Newman comments that the oral contraceptive pill was developed two decades after the technological preconditions for it had already been set.[5]

Since the 2000s, along with such feminist critiques, the social construction of technology (SCOT) approach has prompted more scholars to investigate how modern contraceptive technologies were

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[3] Judy Wajcman, *Feminism Confronts Technology* (Penn State Press, 1991), 74.

[4] Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976).

[5] Elkie Newman, "Who Controls Birth Control," in *Smothered by Invention: Technology in Women's Lives, ed. by Wendy Faulkner and Erik Arnold* (Pluto, 1985), 128–43.

socially constructed with a particular focus on their developmental processes. In the history of hormonal contraceptives and IUDs, global efforts to control population have been identified as the most significant social contexts that shaped the technologies. Scholars have shed light on how these efforts rendered the ways in which physicians, scientists, and advocates of population control experimented, designed, and evaluated those technologies. At the same time, they have explored how these efforts were intertwined with gender politics and the hierarchical perspective of Western advocates toward population in developing countries.[6]

In her study on the discussions surrounding IUDs across two distinct eras and locations, Anni Dugdale examines the influence of developers' assumptions about the purpose of contraceptives and their potential users on their interpretation of the IUDs. In the late 1920s, Ernst Gräfenberg, a physician and the inventor of the Gräfenberg Ring, promoted his ring as a means to achieve women's equality and as a distinctive scientific advancement over stem pessaries. Influences from the Sex Reform Congress in London led him to position the ring as a contraceptive device for middle-class clients seeking to control their sexuality and fertility. However, during the 1960s, when IUDs were employed as a means of population control in developing countries, the technology acquired a different meaning. Christopher Tietze, a key figure in the modern IUD development at the Population Council (hereafter PC), situated the IUDs as the optimal contraceptive technology for ignorant populations rather than for rational individuals. In the process, he reduced individual women to mere numbers in demographic strategies.[7]

Similarly, Jessika Van Kammen and Nelly Oudshoorn investigate the influence of discourses on population control on disparate evaluations of male and female contraceptive technology in their study on risk assessment in the development of IUDs and hormonal contraceptive methods. Prior to the advent of the women's health movement, which was shaped by second-wave feminism, in the 1980s, experts evaluated these contraceptives not in comparison to one another, but in terms of their efficacy in preventing an unwanted pregnancy. Therefore, the developers considered the "non-life-threatening side effects" of these effective contraceptive technologies to be inconsequential. In contrast, in the case of male contraceptives, which could be as effective as the aforementioned female

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[6] Nelly Oudshoorn, *Beyond the Natural Body: An Archaeology of Sex Hormones* (Routledge, 2003); Chikako Takeshita, *The Global Biopolitics of the IUD: How Science Constructs Contraceptive Users and Women's Bodies* (MIT Press, 2012).

[7] Anni Dugdale, "Intrauterine Contraceptive Devices, Situated Knowledges, and the Making of Women's Bodies," *Australian Feminist Studies* 15.32 (2000): 165–76.

contraceptives in population control, developers have regarded individual men's experiences related to sexuality, such as libido and potency, as significant standards.[8]

These studies of the development of contraceptive technology tend to focus on criticizing those developers of modern contraceptive technology who overlooked or neglected women's health and experiences by emphasizing side effects. In these narratives, with the exception of vocal feminist activists, ordinary women users have been described as victims suffering from the side effects of female contraceptives, which were developed based on gendered evaluation.

In contrast, studies on ordinary users of oral contraceptive pills demonstrate that women were neither victims nor passive consumers. In her book *On the Pill*, Elizabeth Watkins shifts the focus from developers to users, exploring the reasons why middle-class women in the United States embraced oral contraceptives and how they influenced regulations on medicine and the patient-physician relationship. In the optimistic view of medical and technological progress in the 1960s, women who had already practiced contraception compared oral contraceptive pills with preexisting contraceptive methods, such as condoms and diaphragms, and recognized the side effects of the pill that they experienced. The oral contraceptive pill users' questions and litigations related to the safety of the pills contributed to the establishment of medicine regulation and a new relationship between patients and physicians, which was represented by patient package inserts (medication guides) and informed consent.[9]

The focus on women users, who actively embraced contraceptive technology and shaped the technological landscape, has rarely been employed in the narratives on women in non-Western regions.[10] However, around 2010, an interest in global history led to a reconsideration of the nature of global population control and opened opportunities to view women, who have been described as victims of trials for contraceptive technology, in a different light. Previous studies have regarded the

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[8] Jessika van Kammen and Nelly Oudshoorn, "Gender and Risk Assessment in Contraceptive Technologies," *Sociology of Health & Illness* 24.4 (2002): 436–61.

[9] Elizabeth Watkins, *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives* (Johns Hopkins University, 1998).

[10] For the studies that considered South Korean women victims of contraceptive technology by the FPP, Lee Mi-kyung 이미경, "Kukkaŭi ch'ulssanjŏngch'aek 국가의 출산정책 (A Feminist Analysis of the State Policy on Birth Control)," *Yŏsŏnghangnonjip* 6 (1989): 49–78; So Hyunsoog 소현숙, "Nŏmu manhi naha ch'angp'ihamnida: kajokkyehoek 너무 많이 낳아 창피합니다: 가족계획 (A Shame to Give Birth to Too Many Children: Family Planning)," in *20segi yŏsŏngsagŏnsa 20 세기 여성사건사 (The Events in Women's History in the Twentieth Century)* (Sŏhaemunjip, 2001), 173–85; Jeong Yeonbo 정연보, "생명경제와 재생산: 가족계획 사업의 실험적 성격과 연구자원으로서의 몸 (Bioeconomy and Reproduction: The Experimentality of Birth Control Project and Bodies as Resources for Research)," *Kkwahakkisurhagyŏn'gu* 20.3 (2020): 31–64.

global effort for population control as a form of the repression of women in developing countries by the United States under the Cold War politics. In contrast, the history of the global population control movement considers it to be global governance in the postcolonial world and a transnational network that was constructed by a variety of social groups with their own motivations and goals. These groups include influential individuals, international organizations, nonprofit organizations, and national governments.[11]

With this recognition, recent studies on the history of contraceptive technology in non-Western worlds have focused on family planning campaigns as a project through which a range of local and international actors disseminates knowledge and technology related to contraception.[12] In a similar vein, historians of science, medicine, and technology in East Asia have also initiated a reconsideration of family planning campaigns. These scholars view the campaigns as transnational interactions between heterogeneous stakeholders through which technology and knowledge were transferred, exchanged, and disseminated, rather than as state-led top-down projects.[13] However, the predominant interest in technological development and transfer has led them to attend to those involved in the process and their interactions. They have concentrated on local physicians, scientists, population experts, and bureaucrats, and their transnational interactions with foreign counterparts and international population organizations rather than on women as users of the technologies.

In contrast, in her book *Human Reproduction in Modern Korea*, feminist sociologist Bae Eun-kyung directs attention to women users and contraceptive technology as a means of allowing them to satisfy their desire for birth control. She highlights the efforts of women to practice contraception and the movement of women for birth control in the 1950s, underscoring women's preexisting desires to control their fertility. Consequently, when the government distributed more efficacious contraceptive

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[11] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008); Michael E Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and US Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Cornell University Press, 2010); Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth* (Columbia University Press, 2014); Michelle Murphy, *The Economization of Life* (Duke University Press, 2017).

[12] Raúl Necochea López, *A History of Family Planning in Twentieth-Century Peru* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

[13] Aya Homei, "Between the West and Asia: 'Humanistic' Japanese Family Planning in the Cold War," *East Asian Science, Technology and Society*: An International Journal 10.4 (2016): 445–67; John DiMoia, *Reconstructing Bodies: Biomedicine, Health, and Nation-Building in South Korea since 1945* (Stanford University Press, 2013); Park Seungmann 박승만, "Pokkanggyŏngŭi kisulssa: 1970–80nyŏndae han'gugŭi pokkanggyŏng kisul toipkwa pogŭp, yŏnghyang 복강경의 기술사: 1970–80 년대 한국의 복강경 기술 도입과 보급, 영향 (Technological History of Laparoscopy: Transfer, Spread, and Influence of Laparoscopy in 1970–80s South Korea)" (doctoral thesis, Yonsei University, 2021).

technology than had previously been available, a considerable number of Korean women embraced IUDs, oral contraceptive pills, and female sterilization, despite the potential for adverse effects. As the ideal of the modern mother, who educates her small number of children well, became entrenched, more married women embraced contraception to achieve this ideal of a mother.[14]

Building upon studies that emphasize women as active users with their own motivations and desires, this chapter expands the range of contraceptive technology beyond that of modern contraceptive technology, which was developed by physicians and scientists in the twentieth century. The majority of studies, even those that focus on users, tend to describe how modern technology replaced older, less advanced technology. The narratives indicate that women had been practicing contraception using condoms, spermicides, and abortion long before the advent of modern technology. As soon as they gained access to more effective technologies, they rapidly adopted these new methods, eschewing the older, less reliable, and more inconvenient options. However, as illustrated by Yi Mi-kyŏng's experience, even when women had access to a broader range of contraceptive technology, they sometimes chose seemingly less reliable contraceptive technology based on their own decisions and the sociocultural context in which they were situated. This suggests that the underlying assumption that women would automatically accept more effective technology guaranteed by experts without hesitation must be reconsidered.

In her concise yet comprehensive book, Donna Drucker notes that while modern contraceptives were revolutionary, they did not supersede or replace preexisting, non-hormonal contraceptive technologies. Older contraceptive methods, including condoms, sponges, and the rhythm or timing methods, have persisted due to various factors such as personal preference, a lack of supply, or limited access to other contraceptive options in many parts of the world.[15] In *The Shock of Old*, David Edgerton also indicates that condoms experienced a resurgence as a means of protection from sexually transmitted diseases, particularly in response to concerns over AIDS.[16] Similarly, Sarah Mellors Rodriguez, in her book *Reproductive Realities in Modern China, acknowledges the* coexistence of the old and new technology in China.[17] This chapter recognizes such coexisting technologies as alternatives that allow users to engage with contraception in creative and diverse ways. It challenges

[14] Bae Eun-kyung 배은경, *Hyŏndae han'gugŭi in'gan chaesaengsan 현대 한국의 인간 재생산 (Human Reproduction in Modern Korea)* (Siganyŏhaeng, 2012).

[15] Donna J Drucker, *Contraception: A Concise History* (MIT Press, 2020).

[16] David Edgerton, *Shock of the Old: Technology and Global History since 1900* (Profile books, 2011), 23–4.

[17] Sarah Mellors Rodriguez*, Reproductive Realities in Modern China: Birth Control and Abortion, 1911–2021* (Cambridge University Press: 2022)

the idea that women were passive recipients of new, modern technologies distributed by governments and international population organizations.

As in the preceding chapter, this chapter employs the concept of the affordance of technology and its mechanisms as an analytic tool for examining the engagement of women users with contraceptive technologies. This chapter also considers how users chose a specific contraceptive technology as a technology that allowed them to achieve their purpose, and how they responded to the demands and requests from the technology. However, in contrast to the previous chapter, this chapter emphasizes the extensive range of alternatives that allowed for more diverse ways in which women engaged with technology.

Individual technologies demand and request certain actions from the users. In response to the demands and requests, women could accept, reject them, or find alternatives. Therefore, the existence of alternatives facilitated users' involvement with multiple contraceptives in subtle and varied ways beyond a mere acceptance or rejection of a specific technology. The FPP provided Korean women with access to a diverse range of viable alternatives. To illustrate, if a user of an IUD experienced excessive vaginal discharge, she could accept the request of the technology, bearing the non-life-threatening side effects, or cease using it and explore alternatives, such as oral contraceptive pills, tubal ligation, the rhythm method, or condoms. While the range of actions and alternatives was always constrained by the material and sociocultural context in which the user was situated, the FPP gradually relieved such constraints and allowed women to consider more alternatives.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The initial section begins in 1945, a period during which Koreans were gratified by their emancipation from Japanese rule. However, this period was soon followed by the division of Korea and the Korean War. The political shift resulted in opposition to birth control by the majority of intellectuals and, more importantly, two political leaders. Conversely, regional movements emerged that advocated birth control under the name of family planning. The prevailing antagonism toward birth control limited the range of contraceptive options available to women. In this situation, only affluent women in urban areas used black-market spermicidal tablets and condoms from Japan and America. Otherwise, they chose the rhythm method or surgical abortion, which was illegal but prevalent. Other women turned to folk treatments such as herbal abortifacients or quinine.

The second section begins in 1961, when the Park Chunghee military junta, despite persistent opposition to birth control, declared the FPP as part of its economic development program. For the program, the government removed legal restrictions on contraceptives and established a family planning clinic in each health center. The state network, through which new contraceptive technologies were transferred, served as a local node within a larger national and global network for

the global population control movement. By the early 1970s, women were able to access preexisting contraceptives such as condoms and spermicides, as well as newer medical contraceptive methods including IUDs and oral pills, through this global network and the domestic market. However, women's technological choices were largely shaped by where they lived, their husbands' and parents-in-law's attitudes toward contraception, and their economic conditions.

The third section begins in the early 1970s, when a new surgical contraceptive method, laparoscopic tubal ligation, was introduced in South Korea. By that time, the government had enacted the Maternal and Child Health Act, which aimed to promote the FPP more aggressively and virtually legalize abortion. The act facilitated greater access to a wider range of contraceptive technologies. Throughout the 1980s, there was a notable increase in the number of women giving birth in hospitals, undergoing prenatal checkups, and becoming more familiar with medical technologies related to childbirth and pregnancy. The entanglements of married women with these technologies allowed the women to recognize diverse alternatives and to devise more subtle ways of using them.

4.1. Discourse on Birth Control and Preexisting Technologies

Controversial Birth Control

In 1949, four years after Korea was liberated from three decades of Japanese rule, *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* published an editorial in which it was asserted that a rumor was being circulated concerning the collection of opinions on birth control by senior officials in the Ministry of Welfare. The author posited that a wealthy and powerful nation can only be achieved through the possession of "a vast territory and abundant human resources, which are composed of elite soldiers and advanced industrial warriors." Consequently, the author expressed concern that the government's implementation of a birth control policy could have a detrimental impact on the nation's future. In reference to the "sterilization law" in Japan, the Japanese Eugenic Protection Law which permitted abortion for eugenic and economic reasons, the author argued that such a measure to limit was not appropriate for the "newborn" Korea, but rather more suited for Japan, "the defeated nation."[18] Given the fact that the newspaper company was established by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul in

[18] The Eugenic Protection Law was abolished in 1996 because of its eugenic implications. Tiana Norgren, *Abortion before Birth Control: The Politics of Reproduction in Postwar Japan* (Princeton University Press, 2001), 22–52, 140–155.

South Korea, it can be reasonably inferred that the author's animosity toward birth control was partly a consequence of his religious beliefs.[19]

It is noteworthy, however, that his assertion that population is a human resource for the nation's future resonated with contemporary Korean intellectuals. In the same year, *The Dong-A Ilbo* published a brief commentary on a news item concerning the discovery of the bodies of two newborn infants in a drain near a maternity hospital in Seoul. Regarding the resolution of this unfortunate situation, the author stated that the law of "the defeated country," which allowed abortion, "cannot be applied to our nation." Rather, the author proposed that the moralization of young people is the most effective means of addressing the problem.[20]

The Korean War in 1950–1953 prompted a shift in discourse on birth control. The conflict resulted in the loss of over one million Korean lives and the destruction of infrastructure, leading to political and economic turmoil. Conversely, the advent of antibiotics during the war contributed to a reduction in infant mortality. Therefore, as the war ended, numerous couples who had postponed marriage began having children, resulting in a baby boom, comparable to that observed in the United States and Europe following World War II.[21]

This situation gave rise to the emergence of birth control as a controversial issue among various actors involved. An article published in *The* 1958 *Kyunghyang Shinmun* reflects the evolving atmosphere surrounding this issue. The article, entitled "Limiting Birth Goes Against Nature," presented a diverse array of perspectives, including those of a Catholic priest, writers, painters, a Korean literature scholar, prosecutors, and a housewife. As indicated by the article's title, the editor of the Catholic-backed newspaper was forthright in expressing his opposition to birth control. Nevertheless, this does not indicate that the editor misrepresented the views of those who advocated for birth control. The disparate tones and vocabulary of the individuals represented on the page demonstrate that the editor reported their voices fairly, which made the article noteworthy. In the article, Father Yun Hyŏng-chung argued that abortion should be prohibited in all instances, as it constitutes murder. Furthermore, he asserted that any form of contraception, except for the rhythm

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[19] "Sasŏl: sanajehanŭl pakham 產兒制限論을 駁함 (Editorial: Refutation of Limiting Birth)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 18 October 1949.

[20] "Hyujit'ong 휴지통(Trash Basket)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 12 April 1949.

[21] Kim Doo-sub 김두섭, "Han'gugŭi in'gusŏngjanggwa ch'ulssallyŏkpyŏnch'ŏn 한국의 인구성장과 출산력변천, 1910–1990 (Population Growth and the Fertility Transition in Korea, 1910–1990)," *Sahoegwahangnonŭi* 10 (1991): 117–40.

method and abstinence, is contrary to God's will. He concluded his remarks with a nationalistic rhetoric advocating against the approval of birth control.

> *Given that our nation is situated between Japan, with a population of over 100 million, and China and Siberia, with a population of over 500 million, it is untenable to advocate for birth control from the perspective of national protection [minjokpoho].*

It is noteworthy that other opponents also mentioned the terms state, nation, and population.[22] Ma Hae-song, a children's book author, expressed support for an increase in population, although he argued that the state should provide support for childbirth and childcare. The female poet Mo Yun-suk explicitly opposed what she termed "birth control against nature," stating that "population means the power of a state." Nevertheless, she wrote that "given our challenging circumstances, [the decision to] have several children should be made with great care."

While her stance on birth control was oblique, advocates articulated their positions. The majority of advocates supported birth control for economic reasons, emphasizing the nurturing and education of children, yet they opposed abortion. The opinion of housewife Yi Kye-hyang is remarkable for its reflection of the voices of ordinary women and their recognition of reality.

> *Given the reality in our society, I would like to agree with the issue [limiting birth]. I have three children, who are very dear to me. But, if we cannot feed and educate them well, is it not more sinful to bear them like animals? (…) However, I cannot help but oppose contraception among young people simply for pleasure and convenience, because that is an indecent attitude. And if an abortion is caused by a failure of contraception, and is done to avoid pregnancy through surgery, it can be considered a form of murder. So I am not in favor of it.*[23]

Some advocates of birth control proceeded to urge population control. In 1956 Chŏng Sun-ŭng, a physician in Gangneung City, Kangwon Province, published a series of articles in *The Chosun Ilbo*

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[22] For the terms "state" and "nation," historian of medicine in China and Taiwan Sean Hsiang-lin Lei notes that the boundary between nation and state is oblique in China because the concepts of nation and state were constructed simultaneously, unlike in European countries where the concept of a nation emerged and subsequently that of a state. Kuk (國) indicates a state or nation and sometimes indicates both state and nation depending on who, when, or for what used the term. It also applies to South Korea, which has shared many characteristics and translated concepts with China. Therefore, I will interpret "kuk" as a state *or* nation depending on the context. Sean Hsiang-lin Lei, *Neither Donkey nor Horse* (University of Chicago Press, 2014), 114.

[23] "Sanajehanŭn chayŏneŭi yŏkhaeng 産兒制限은 自然에의 逆行 (Limiting Birth Goes Against Nature)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun,* 7 July 1958.

concerning the population problem. He advanced this argument by citing statistics on food supply, the prospect of unemployment, and his experiences as a clinician in a rural area. He argued that South Korea had not yet reached the level of industrialization necessary to support its current population, and thus the state should implement population control policies to regulate birth and death rates. Indeed, his articles did not explicitly endorse contraception.[24] However, when he became a lawmaker in 1960, he suggested that "contraception control" could be a solution to the population problem.[25]

Chŏng was not the sole individual advocating a population policy based on birth control. In the late 1950s, some Korean officials involved in public health attempted to establish a population policy with the objective of reducing population growth.[26] However, their proposals for a population policy failed to gain substantial support among policymakers and, more importantly, were impeded by two political leaders, President Syngman Rhee (in office 1945–1960) and later Prime Minister Chang Myon (in office 1960–1961). In 1959, Kim Yong-t'aek, the vice minister of the Ministry of Social Affairs, urged the first Korean president, Rhee, on the importance of birth control.[27] Rhee neither explicitly opposed nor supported a population policy aimed at reducing population growth, most likely due to political concerns:

> *"I totally agree with you. There is a time for everything. However, it's not the time. We cannot reduce the population until we hold a general election in both South and North Korea. After the election, we should launch [birth control policy]."*[28]

Chang Myon, who assumed the role of prime minister in 1960 following Rhee's forced resignation due to the April Revolution (419 Revolution), had justifiable reasons for not endorsing a birth control policy. He was known as a devout Catholic, to the extent that he converted some cabinet ministers. In

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[24] Chŏng Sun-ŭng 鄭順膺, "In'gumunjewa in'gujŏngch'aek 人口問題와 人口政策(六) (The Population Problem and Population Policy (6))," *Chosun Ilbo*, 3 December 1956.

[25] National Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Proceeding of the Fifth Assembly, The 37th Round, the 213rd the Plenary Session, 1960; "Kangnŭng chŏngsunŭng paksa 『sŏnbiinsul』54nyŏn…kungnae ch'oejang kaeŏbŭi 江陵 鄭順膺 박사『선비仁術』54 年…국내 최장開業醫 (Doctor Chŏng Sun-ŭng in Gangneung City: Medicine of a Sunbi for 54years, the Longest Clinical Experience in the Country)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, April 1991.

[26] Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea(PPFK), *Kahyŏp 30nyŏnsa 家協 30 年史 (The History of Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea for Thirty Years)* (Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea, 1991), 106.

[27] The Ministry of Social Affairs was integrated into the Ministry of Health and Social Affair in 1955.

[28] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 350.

addition to his religious convictions, he had to consider the political support of Catholics, who played a significant role in his election as vice president in 1956 as well.[29]

Emerging Family Planning Movements

Although the political leaders were hesitant to endorse birth control, some people conducted birth control campaigns, albeit on a limited scale. In Daegu City, American missionary George C. Worth, who worked under the Korean name Oh Ch'ŏn-hye, published booklets titled "Ideal Home" on the topics of birth control and distributed them to residents of the slums. Additionally, he placed an advertisement in a daily newspaper offering to send the materials to those who expressed interest.[30] Esther Laird, who worked in Daejeon City, was another American Protestant missionary engaged in the dissemination of information on "family planning."[31] Other efforts regarding birth control were also undertaken by Americans. The International Cooperation Administration (ICA) and the Office of Economic Coordinator (OEC) of the United Nations Command (UNC) supported "family planning" campaigns at the community level as a part of rural area development programs.[32]

While some foreign individuals and agencies implemented some efforts to promote birth control as a measure of improving general conditions in rural areas and the inner cities, some educated Korean women initiated a family planning campaign. They argued that birth control was beneficial to the nation as well as women, under the name of "family planning." To encourage the practice of family planning, sociologist and educator Koh Hwang-Kyung and female physicians established the Korean Mothers' Association (hereafter KMA) and initiated their birth control campaign in 1959.[33] It is important to note that the movement was neither indigenous nor entirely independent of foreign influence. Koh, who played a pivotal role in establishing the association, was closely connected to the

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[29] Bae Eun-kyung 배은경, "Han'guksahoe ch'ulssanjojŏrŭi yŏksajŏk kwajŏnggwa chendŏ 한국사회 출산조절의 역사적 과정과 젠더 (A Social History of Korean Women's Birth Control: 1950s–1970s)" (doctoral thesis, Seoul National University, 2004), 85–6.

[30] Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs(KIHSA), *In'gujŏngch'aek 30nyŏn 人口政策 30 年 (The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years)* (Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, 1991), 9.

[31] Kim Ok-kyung 김옥경, "Yŏksaro pon han'gukkajokkyehoegŭi paldaryoin 역사로 본 한국가족계획의 발달요인 (The Factors in Development of Family Planning in South Korea: Focusing on Its History)" (master's thesis, Yonsei University, 1971), 21.

[32] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years,* 107.

[33] Korean Mothers' Association, *Taehanŏmŏnihoe 40nyŏnsa 대한어머니회 40 년사 (40 Years of Korean Mothers' Association) (Korean Mot*hers' Association, 1998), 58–60.

global population control movement. After obtaining her doctorate in sociology from Michigan State University in 1937, she became a prominent educator and was involved in numerous projects. She subsequently assumed the role of Director of the Women's Department in the U.S. Military Government in Seoul. In 1949, she traveled to the United States to pursue studies in population issues at Princeton University and Columbia University, with financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation.[34]

Her arrival in the United States coincided with a period of significant change in American population policy and the academic environment surrounding it. Until the mid-1940s, American population experts regarded the reduction of fertility rates as a consequence of modernization. Consequently, they were not in favor of interventions to reduce population. Since the late 1940s, the experts, particularly demographers at Princeton University's Office of Population Research, including Frank W. Notestein, who later became the inaugural director of the United Nations Population Division, reassessed their position. In 1948, Notestein and his colleagues put forth the proposition that the provision of contraceptives would prove a more effective strategy than awaiting the impact of for industrialization on the behavior of the rural population. In the mid-1950s, these arguments attracted the attention of policymakers, philanthropic organizations, and cooperative leaders who were concerned that rapid population growth in the Third World would exacerbate poverty and trigger a communist revolution. The consensus contributed to the emergence of a powerful global network for population control. The establishment of the Population Council (hereafter PC) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (hereafter IPPF), both of which were funded by John D. Rockefeller, were part of such networks.[35] Koh, who studied amid the global population control movement and visited other European countries for eight years, was able to witness the movement firsthand.

Upon her return home in 1957, Koh reached out to female physicians, including Kang Chu-sim, the president of the Association of Christian Women Physicians, and persuaded them of the need for "family planning." The meeting concluded with the establishment of the KMA in March 1958. Flagging its nationalistic slogan, "A strong nation comes from enlightened mothers," it held the inaugural assembly with 1,500 participants, named Koh as the first president, and began a family planning campaign in 1959. The campaign's objective was to disseminate knowledge about family planning, which was the only legal option available due to the Korean government's prohibition on the

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[34] Kim Sŏn-ae 김선애, "Koh Hwang-kyung paksa 高凰京 博士 (Doctor Koh Hwang-kyung)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 28 July 1973.

[35] Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution,* 95–9.

importation of contraceptive devices and substances. In addition to sharing information about family planning, the association provided guidance on a range of "motherhood issues" at its clinics in 16 hospitals in Seoul and organized lectures.[36]

It should be noted that the KMA promoted birth control under the names "mother" and "nation." They employed nationalistic rhetoric rather than situating birth control as a women's right, as did American birth control advocates in the early and mid-twentieth century, such as Margaret Sanger. As Dennis Hodgson and Susan Cotts Watkins observe, Sanger formed alliances with eugenics, and subsequently with neo-Malthusianism to advocate birth control.[37] As Sanger drew upon the concepts of race, more specifically, eugenics, as well as those of population, from these ideological movements, the KMA employed the word "nation." A newspaper article written by the physician Kang, the representative of the association, serves to illustrate the situation. In *The* 1959 *Dong-A Ilbo* article on the KMA's contributions to the family planning campaign, Kang began the report by emphasizing the importance of mothers in fostering "a happy family, a sound society, and a strong nation." The KMA's objective was to support these roles. She enumerated the mother's roles as frugal wives who manage a household and prevent juvenile delinquency. While these roles were somewhat abstract, her report on the health counseling program of the association addressed more concrete concerns related to contraception in reality.

> *Over 80% of the 173 visitors asked about problems regarding family planning, or in other words, contraception. It is a social and national problem. However, for the mothers, it became an urgent and significant issue that they were confronting. Most of them are poor, with too many children to support. They are likely to conceive a new baby each year or about a hundred days after their previous delivery, which is harmful to both the mothers' health and children's development. Among them, some young mothers asked for methods.*[38]

Her remark on contraception as a "social and national problem" illustrates her awareness of the potential dangers of framing it as a solely women's issue. However, as she explicitly stated, contraception was a challenge that women confronted and attempted to address. In this sense, the

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[36] Korean Mothers' Association, *40 Years of Korean Mothers' Association*, 58–9.

[37] Dennis Hodgson and Susan Cotts Watkins, "*Feminists and Neo-Malthusians: Past and Present Alliances*," *Population and Development Review* 23.3 (1997): 469–523.

[38] Kang Chu-sim 강주심, "P'iimi kajang tut'onggŏri: han'guk ŏmŏniŭi kwansimgwa munje 避姙이 가장 두통거리: 한국 어머니의 관심과 문제 (Contraception Is the Biggest Problem: Korean Mothers' Interests and Problems)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 28 March 1959.

KMA's birth control movement was influenced by international population movements but also based on the experiences and voices of local women, who were regarded as ignorant and in need of enlightenment by male intellectuals, both foreign and domestic.

In April 1961, two years after the inception of the KMA's family planning campaign, another Korean association for family planning was established: the Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea (hereafter PPFK). The organization's inaugural members of the organization included public health experts, former officials who had previously served at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (hereafter MHSA), educators, journalists, and judges of a Family Court. Additionally, regional advocates promoting birth control at a regional level, including Koh Hawng-kyung, Kang Ju-sim, midwife Ku Shin-myŏng of the KMA, and George C. Worth, joined to the association as board members.[39]

At the time of its establishment, only two major newspapers published their announcements as brief bulletins listing the names of their board members.[40] Given the general antagonism toward birth control at that time, their responses are not surprising. In 1961, while the advocates of birth control began to raise their voices and population emerged as an issue, a considerable number of Korean intellectuals still opposed birth control. The Catholic Church maintained its stance on birth control. In an article published in *The 1961 Kyunghyang Shinmun*, the Church articulated its position on birth control in a clear manner, stating that abortion, and any other form of contraception, including "physiological methods such as evading an ovulation period or calculating body temperature," (i.e., the rhythm method), were strictly forbidden.[41]

Other intellectuals also presented their concerns that birth control would reduce the population in South Korea. As anthropologist Paik Young-gyung notes, in the 1950s and even in the 1960s, South Korean intellectuals were opposed to birth control. For them, population growth was perceived as a beneficial factor in the country's relations with North Korea and other external threats, rather than a problematic element. As was President Syngman Rhee, some were concerned that the implementation of birth control measures would reduce the voting population in South Korea, thereby

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[39] Following the inauguration of the FPP, Worth assumed the role of director on the board of the association and served as a Korea-Japan representative of the Population Council. KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 9.

[40] "Allim kajokkyehoekhyŏphoebaljok 알림 家族計劃協會發足 (Announcement: The launch of the Family Planning Association), " *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 31 March 1961;

"Kajokkyehoekhyŏphoe paljok 家族計劃協會 발족 (The Establishment of the PPFK)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 3 April 1961.

[41] "Salmŭi 『p'angp'arŭ』 (9) saram [Ha] 삶의『팡파르』 (9) 사람 [下] (Fanfare in Life (9) Human [2/2])," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 10 January 1961.

undermining the country's electoral advantage over North Korea in the event of a potential general election. In the same vein, some were concerned that birth control would diminish national power by reducing the number of soldiers. Even in the early 1960s, when the possibility of a general election over the two Koreas diminished and concerns were raised that the high unemployment rate could incite South Koreans, the notion that the population size is a significant element in the protection of sovereignty remained a tenable proposition. Despite the mid-1960s establishing the idea that economic development, rather than an abundance of military personnel or voters, was the most effective means of vanquishing the North, concerns about population decline persisted.[42]

In this atmosphere, the establishment of the PPFK received minimal attention within the country. However, from the perspective of global history and, more importantly, contraception, the establishment of the PPFK was a far more significant event. It marked the moment when a node of the global network—comprising actors with disparate purposes, including local elite groups, male experts regarding public health, and international organizations—began to coalesce under the global population control movement, which would subsequently shape Korean women's contraceptive choices.

The establishment was the result of an initiative by an international population organization. The visit of George Cadbury, the Field Director of the IPPF, in December 1960 served as the impetus for the formation of the PPFK. The IPPF was established by a resolution of the Bombay Conference in 1952. In that year, the organization accepted family planning associations in Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States, West Germany, India, Hong Kong, and Singapore as members and expanded its membership to include not only voluntary organizations but also governments in thirty-two countries by 1961. By that time, the IPPF had sought to establish an international network for birth control movements rather than to intervene directly with local actors. This approach was driven by the concern of its leaders that such intervention might be perceived as exerting control by "wealthy" countries over "poor" countries.

Nevertheless, the concept of population control in the poor countries emerged as a potential solution to the population explosion in the United States, prompting a fundamental shift in the IPPF's

[42] Paik Young-gyung 백영경, "Sahoejŏk momŭrosŏŭi in'guwa chisigŭi chŏngch'i: 1960nyŏndae 『sasanggye』sogŭi chŏngch'ijŏk sangsanggwa chayujuŭijŏk t'ongch'iŭi han'gye 사회적 몸으로서의 인구와 지식의 정치: 1960 년대 『사상계』속의 정치적 상상과 자유주의적 통치의 한계(Population as a Social Body and the Politics of Knowledge: Political Imaginations of *Sasanggye* in the 1960s and the Limits of Liberal Governance)," *Yŏsŏngmunhagyŏn'gu* 29 (2013):7–36.

approach on the population issue. In 1959, a presidential commission chaired by William Draper submitted a report called the Draper Report, which warned that population growth would threaten national security and recommended that economic aid be provided by the United States to mitigate this threat. The report gave rise to public concern about overpopulation. Despite the Catholic Church's sustained opposition to the matter, the prevailing climate in America led American money to "pour" into organizations addressing population movement. While the IPPF did not entirely relinquish its concern about the involvement of wealthy countries in the affairs of developing countries, competition with other U.S.-based population organizations, such as the PC and the Pathfinder Foundation led it to accept American funding and adopt an emergency approach. In alignment with this transition of the IPPF around 1960, George Cadbury, who had worked as a technical assistance administrator for the U.N. for approximately ten years, was employed by the organization.[43]

In 1960, Cadbury initiated a five-month visit to Asian countries, including South Korea. In October of that year, Cadbury arrived in South Korea and made contact with Professor Yang Jae-mo at the Medicine College of Yonsei University and Lee Jong-jin, a former official of the MHSA. Both individuals had previously established a relationship with the IPPF, albeit not yet at a profound level, through the WHO (World Health Organization). Funded by the WHO, Yang visited the head of the IPPF in London during his European tour, with the objective of examining the social security system. Lee had been a subscriber to the IPPF's newsletter since studying public health and maternal and child health at Johns Hopkins, which was also supported by the WHO. Yang Jae-mo and Lee Jong-jin convened a meeting for Cadbury, during which he was able to meet and contact approximately twenty relevant Koreans, including officials of the MHSA. Cadbury recommended the establishment of a private organization to promote family planning in response to the population growth problem. Upon his departure from Korea, he pledged financial support in the amount of 3,000 dollars annually for a period of several years, earmarked for operating expenses.[44] Given the mounting concerns about population growth in South Korea, it is understandable that the Koreans had embraced the idea of establishing an organization to address this issue. On April 1, 1961, the PPFK was established with the financial assistance of Sŏl Wŏn-sik, the owner of the Korean Textile Cooperation. On April 8, the PPFK requested membership approval at the IPPF.[45]

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[43] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, 177–95.

[44] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 109.

[45] KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 9.

This story illustrates the ways in which an international population organization built a network for the global population control movement, leveraging the existing local advocates of birth control as a mediator between the organization and government. Instead of contacting the KMA, which was engaged in a birth control campaign, or the government, the IPPF selected two male public health experts and groups of officials in the MHSA to establish a new association. The formation of a local association would enable the IPPF to avoid any potential concerns about Western interventions in the intimate lives of people in developing countries. Additionally, it would facilitate a connection with the government, the most powerful local actor. The inaugural president of PPFK, Koh Hawng-kyung, subsequently resigned, and former Minister of MHSA Na Yong-kyun assumed the role.[46] However, until this point, PPFK was a private organization, and the prerequisites for its global network to function properly were not yet in place.

Ordinary Women's Use of Diverse Contraceptives

In the 1950s, while a considerable number of Korean intellectuals debated birth control, as observed by physician Kang Chu-sim, an increasing number of women, particularly those from the middle-class, began to express a desire for contraception. As Sonja Kim notes, some writers in colonial Korea, had already proposed that birth control would allow women "to avoid the pain and inconvenience of childbirth" or the lack of time to enjoy their lives, thereby facilitating "personal fulfillment." Pak Ho-jin, an activist in a women's organization, argued that birth control would afford women sufficient time to recuperate from each pregnancy, thus allowing them to cultivate their talents and personalities. This resonated with the image of the New Woman, who rejected the conventional moral system of the first half of the twentieth century.[47] While a select few courageous feminists publicly supported birth control based on women's rights through public magazines, ordinary women presented their desires for birth control indirectly, through readers' letters, in which they inquired about contraceptive methods. Tragic news of accidents in which women died from self-induced abortions also illustrated such women's desires.

In contrast, by the mid-1950s, ordinary women began to voice their support for birth control on several grounds. An article in *The 1954 Kyunghyang Shinmun* provides an illustrative example of this transformation. The article, authored by housewife Chŏng Sŏn-ae, elucidates her and her friends'

[46] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 332.

[47] Sonja Kim, "'Limiting Birth': Birth Control in Colonial Korea (1910–1945)," *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 2.3 (2008): 335–59.

perspectives and experiences regarding contraception. According to her account, among her friends, who were middle-class women whose husbands were "well-paid," the topic of birth control became a prevalent topic of discussion.

> *Nam's husband is an entrepreneur. She thinks that her two daughters are not enough. However, considering that [having more children] would disrupt her social life and bother her, she decided not to give birth [again]. She has experienced several abortions because her husband does not like unnatural things. Sin, whose husband is a physician, has six children. She said that she will have as many children as her situation allows, questioning whether it is necessary to reject a given, just, and natural life. Kang's husband is a salaried worker. Fortunately, when he traveled to America on business, he acquired some knowledge concerning this matter. Since then, the couple has agreed that they will make their best efforts to educate their three children and have no more children. Therefore, the couple manages their natural married life [sexual intercourse] without any pain or shame due to abortion. However, other friends, Kim and Yi, are firmly against birth control, arguing that women's pride comes from caring for children and there is no reason to abandon women's duty.*

Chŏng herself was an advocate of birth control. She had a son and two daughters and sought birth control to ensure time for her self-improvement (*chagisuyang*). However, she had not yet formulated concrete plans due to her husband's reluctance regarding birth control. For her, birth control was necessary, but she was reluctant to take actions that could contravene her husband's wishes. Additionally, she lacked the requisite "professional knowledge" to pursue it. Nevertheless, she was unequivocal in her opposition to abortion, citing the "physical pain" and moral anguish it would cause. She viewed abortion as tantamount to "killing a life in order to evade one's own responsibility."[48]

Her and some of her friends' experiences illustrate how ordinary women began to express their desire for birth control through their own voices, emphasizing the importance of social lives or self-improvement. At the same time, the article suggests that a few women practiced contraception with their husbands, and some women whose husbands rejected contraception or the use of some contraceptives relied on abortions. These experiences were common enough for female friends to share. Others, such as Chŏng, were ready to engage in birth control practices only if they could obtain their husbands' consent, appropriate knowledge, or contraceptive technology.

Some women, particularly those who were less wealthy, were keen to gain access to contraceptive technology that they actively sought out. Among these active women was Im Sun-ae. In her essay,

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[48] Chŏng Sŏn-ae 정순애, "Sanajehansibi 산아제한시비(Debates on Birth Control)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 18 July 1954.

which was awarded a prize in an essay contest held by the PPFK and a women's magazine in 1974, she revealed her desire for contraception and her use of contraceptives during the 1950s and the early 1960s, even prior to the FPP's inception. As the daughter of six children, she observed her father, an educator, being subjected to repeated persecution and faced transfers, which posed a significant threat to the financial security of her large family. He relocated his family to Tokyo. However, after a few years, circa 1945, her family returned from the city, which had been heavily bombarded by the United States Army Air Forces during WWII, without any possessions. The memory of her mother's arduous seventh delivery, which occurred shortly after the family's return from the city, was indelibly etched in her mind. After giving birth to her second son following her marriage to an official "with a low salary," she began to worry that she might face similar challenges from having many children, just as her mother did.

Following the resumption of her menstruation five months after her delivery, she elected to refrain from further childbearing and sought the counsel of a midwife on the means of "not to have a baby." The midwife initially declined her request, stating that she had "only two children so far." It was not until she had "nearly begged on her knees" that the midwife reluctantly recommended the insertion of a gold ring into her uterus. For the following five years, she secretly "enjoyed" the efficacy of the gold ring, leaving her husband to wonder why she was not pregnant. Unfortunately, one day she experienced severe pain, which was later diagnosed as uterine inflammation caused by the gold ring. While the ring in her uterus allowed contraception without her husband's knowledge, her body did not accept the demand from the technology.

Due to her illness, her husband discerned her contraceptive practice and accused her. This resulted in her discontinuing the use of the gold-ring. However, a subsequent recurrence of the "fear of pregnancy" prompted her to seek the same midwife. The situation unfolded in the same way as the previous negotiation. She implored the midwife, and the midwife, reluctant to divulge the information, informed her of the "tincture of iodine" treatment, which would render her infertile. This method was a well-known contraceptive method at the time.[49] Kim Dŭk-sun also recalled that in the early 1960s, she was informed about the tincture of iodine method by a physician who applied the substance to

[49] Im Sun-ae 임순애, "Yŏkkyŏng igyŏnaen ŭijiŭi kyŏlssil 역경 이겨낸 의지의 결실 (1), (2) (Achievement of Will against Adversity)," *Happy Home*, November 1974, 16–7; December 1974, 16–7.

her genitalia, although it did not prevent a pregnancy.[50] In his 1961 publication, physician Kim Sa-dal introduced a comparable approach, namely chemical application to the uterine cavity (*chagunggang nae yangmul top'obŏp*), although he did not endorse this method.[51] Unfortunately, the iodine method resulted in recurrent inflammation in Im's body after a year, and her body "became frail."

It is clear that Im suffered from the adverse effects associated with the contraceptive methods. Nevertheless, it is also noteworthy that she evaluated her family planning or contraception as "successful." Her implicit criticism of her husband is evident throughout the essay. Rather than offering support, he blamed her contraceptive efforts. Only later did she receive praise for her endeavors. Furthermore, she contrasted her "frail" health condition with that of her sisters-in-law, who did not require female contraceptives due to their husbands and her male siblings engaging in "voluntary family planning," which implied vasectomy. However, she neither ascribed culpability to the midwife who recommended those hazardous methods nor expressed remorse for her decisions.[52] In this sense, despite the adverse effects, the methods allowed her to engage in practical contraception when her husband was uncooperative and there were no alternatives. Im Sun-ae was not an exceptional woman. She was one of the women who began planning their lives by managing their bodies with contraceptive technology. The desires of such women provoked and mingled with the interests of medical practitioners, including midwives and entrepreneurs, even in the hostile atmosphere toward birth control in South Korea in the 1950s.

As people's contraceptive needs facilitated markets in America in the first half of the twentieth century despite the Comstock Act, the Korean contraceptive market was developing, albeit at a slower pace than in the United States.[53] Notwithstanding the government's stance on population control, the manufacture of contraceptives was not prohibited. However, it is difficult to find evidence of domestic manufacturing of contraceptive products in the 1950s. Given the general poor manufacturing

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[50] An Tae-yoon 안태윤, "Iljeha mosŏnge kwanhan yŏn'gu 일제하 모성에 관한 연구 (A Study on Motherhood during the Japanese Colonial Period: Wartime Politics and the Colonization of Motherhood (1910–1945))" (doctoral thesis, Sungshin Women's University, 2001), 146.

[51] Kim Sa-dal 김사달, *Chohŭn agirŭl nannŭn kajokkyehoek 좋은 아기를 낳는 家族計劃 (Family Planning for Having Good Babies)* (Sint'aeyŏksa, 1961), 48–9.

[52] Im Sun-ae, "Achievement of Will against Adversity."

[53] The Comstock Act was a federal law passed in 1873 that criminalized the distribution of "obscene" materials, including those related to sexual health, contraception, and abortion. For the impact of the Act on the contraceptive market in the United States prior to the second half of the twentieth century, see Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (Hill and Wang, 2001).

capabilities in the post-war period, the absence is understandable. Instead, illicit contraceptive products were in circulation around 1950. In 1954, *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* reported that a department store in Busan, a major trade hub between South Korea and Japan after the war, displayed and sold "contraceptive medicine [*p'iimyak*]" called Samp'ung made in Japan.[54] It can be reasonably deduced that the product was Sampoon, a form tablet manufactured by Japanese Eizai Pharmaceutical in Tokyo.[55] One year later, the same newspaper published an article denouncing the sale of several bootleg Japanese patent medicines in two hundred and thirty pharmacies in Seoul. These patent medicines included a range of products, such as "Kaoru [a digestive medicine], Noshing [a headache pill], Rodo [eyedrops]," as well as "contraceptive medicine."[56]

The U.S. Army in South Korea was another source of illicit contraceptives: condoms. Since WWII, condoms have been included in the equipment issued to U.S. soldiers. During WWI, while the Axis powers, particularly Germany, encouraged their soldiers to use condoms to protect themselves from venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea, the U.S. Army advised abstinence due to the prevailing puritanical atmosphere of the time. However, in response to the significant number of discharges due to syphilis and gonorrhea among personnel, the U.S. Army shifted its approach to a strategy of "prophylaxis," which entailed the provision of condoms.[57] This initiative was extended to the U.S. Army in South Korea, which has been stationed there since 1945. In a pamphlet entitled *Guide to a Healthful Tour in Korea* distributed by the Eighth U.S. Army, the author recommended the use of "rubber protectives (condoms)," stating that they are "one of the most effective protections from infection."[58]

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[54] "Iljep'iimyakp'um paekhwajŏme chinyŏl 日製避姙藥品 百貨店에 陳列 (Japanese Contraceptive Medicine Were Displayed in a Department Store)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 10 December 1954.

[55] Aya Homei, "The Science of Population and Birth Control in Post-War Japan," in *Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Modern Japanese Empire, ed. by David G. Wittner and Philip C. Brown* (Taylor & Francis, 2016), 37.

[56] "'Yakkuk'sŏ chusasiryo simjiŏyakchesaga ŭisahaengwi "藥局"서 注射施療 甚之於藥劑師가 醫師行爲 (Substance Injection in 'Pharmacies' and Pharmacists Practicing Even like Physicians)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 18 February 1955.

[57] Aine Collier, *The Humble Little Condom: A History* (Prometheus Books, 2010), 183–7, 190, 236.

[58] EUSA (Eighth United States Army), "Guide to a Healthful Tour in Korea (RG 338, Entry A1 269, Box 21)," 1 August 1960. As cited in Park Jeong-mi 박정미, "Kŏn'ganghan pyŏngsa(wa 'wianbu') mandŭlgi: chuhanmigun sŏngbyŏng t'ongjeŭi yŏksa 건강한 병사(와 '위안부') 만들기: 주한미군 성병 통제의 역사, 1950–1977 년 (Making Healthy Soldiers (and 'Comfort Women'): A History of United States Forces Korea's Sexually Transmitted Disease Control, 1950–1977)," *Sahoewa yŏksa* 124(2019), 284–5.

The condoms, which were distributed or sold to American soldiers in post-exchanges (PX), subsequently found their way into black markets. In addition to Spam, whiskey, socks, soap, cosmetics, irons, and refrigerators, condoms were distributed beyond the military camp for several decades until Korean domestic industries were able to meet the demand of the Korean population.[59] This situation enabled some Korean women to obtain condoms. One woman, Kim Hŭi-jin, recalled her friend who used condoms from the U.S. Army for contraceptive purposes.

> *A friend of mine delivered only three children. She used contraception. I found out that fact when I saw her washing condoms. They were difficult to buy. The thing used by men, sakku, condoms.*[60] *Pharmacies did not sell them; they came from the U.S. Army. She sterilized and dried them. It was right before the outbreak of 6.25 [the Korean War].*[61]

The reuse of condoms remained a common practice throughout the 1960s. In 1961, the physician Kim Sa-dal introduced a condom rack in his book, *Family Planning for Having Good Babies*. He described condoms as a "convenient and effective contraceptive" and provided instructions on how to make a condom drying rack with wires. According to him, if condoms had been "cheap and common," they would have been discarded after each use. However, as they were not yet manufactured in Korea, he argued that they should be reused. He noted that even in Japan, "it was reported that people reuse condoms about ten times." This was the rationale behind his advice on how to make a rack for rubber condoms to prevent them from sticking together, with an illustration of the precise measurements.[62]

Some women employed the rhythm method, which was also known as the Ogino method. This method was developed by Japanese physician Ogino Kyūsaku, who published a timetable for ovulation as a complement to the calculation of the female cycle by Austrian physician Hermann Knaus in 1924. Subsequently, he proposed a periodic contraceptive method based on his findings in 1932 and published an account of his idea for a public audience.[63] In the end, Korean people became part of his audiences in the mid-1930s because educated Korean women could speak Japanese and thus read

[59] Laura C Nelson, *Measured Excess: Status, Gender, and Consumer Nationalism in South Korea* (Columbia University Press, 2000), 86.

[60] *Sakku* comes from the Japanese word *gomu sakku* (ゴムサック), which means "rubber sack" or "condom." In colonial Korea, condoms were already used, although they were mainly used as protection from venereal diseases rather than as contraceptives at that time.

[61] An Tae-yoon, "A Study on Motherhood during the Japanese Colonial Period," 146.

[62] Kim Sa-dal, *Family Planning for Having Good Babies*, 98.

[63] Sabine Frühstück, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan* (Univ. of California Press, 2003), 145.

information about the Ogino Method in Japanese women's magazines written in Japanese, and Korean physicians also introduced the method through Korean-language magazines and newspapers.[64]

The rhythm method was reintroduced by Korean physicians in the 1950s. In 1958, in a series of columns titled "Medicine for Housewives [*chubuŭihak*]," female physician Yi Ok-kyŏng introduced contraceptives such as condoms and spermicides. Additionally, she introduced diaphragms, which were not widely used in South Korea but were available in select medical facilities. For example, Lee Seung-ho, a physician who worked at Severance Hospital of Medical College at Yonsei University from 1956 to 1960, recalled that he recommended the use of diaphragms, which should be selected based on individual measurements.[65] Yi considered the rhythm method the most recommended contraceptive, and thus provided specific information to the potential users, including its mechanisms and precautions. Her assessment of the rhythm method as "the most natural, even free and innocuous," is noteworthy.[66] Yi accurately identified the demands and requests from the contraceptive technology. In contrast to other contraceptive methods, the rhythm method did not demand users to engage in any additional manipulations during or around sexual intercourse. Unlike users of condoms and spermicidal tablets, this method did not request users to wash and dry it. Moreover, there was no need for the users to synchronize with their bodies and contraceptive devices in the same way as those who used diaphragms or gold rings.

Given the aforementioned demands and requests, it is unsurprising that many women employed this method. Yi Sun-gu, a housewife who married in 1932, used the "menstrual periodic method" following the birth of her ninth child in the 1950s.[67] Indeed, some women were more familiar with the rhythm method than physicians. For instance, Kim In-ok, who was born in 1918 and gave birth to her first child in 1945, recalled that her friends used the "Ogino method," which relied on "measuring their body temperature."[68] This was a modified version of the Ogino Method, devised by German priest

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[64] "Piimhagosipta 피임하고십다[*sic*] (I Want Contraception)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 15 May 1936.

[65] *Ch'ulssan'gwa yŏsŏng kŏn'gang, han'guk sanbuin'gwaŭi yŏksa 출산과 여성 건강, 한국 산부인과의 역사 (Childbirth and Women's Health: The History of Obstetrics and Gynecology in South Korea)*, ed. by Han Keung-Hee 한긍희 and Yoon Duk-young 윤덕영 (National Institute of Korean History, 2018), 181.

[66] Yi Ok-kyŏng 이옥경, "Chubuŭihak(66-68) p'iimbŏp 主婦医学 (66-68) 避姙法 (Medicine for Housewives (66–68) Contraception)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 2 October 1958; 16 October 1958; 23 October 1958.

[67] "1nyŏn tongan tan han myŏngŭi agido nach'i anhŭn maŭri ittanŭnde 1 년 동안 단 한 명의 아기도 낳지 않은 마을이 있다는데 (A Village in Which a Single Baby Was Not Born in a Year)," *Happy Home*, January 1974, 16.

[68] An Tae-yoon, "A Study on Motherhood during the Japanese Colonial Period," 146.

Wilhelm Hillebrand, who sought to address the frequent failures in the Ogino calendar method in his parish. It was sometimes called the basal body temperature method (BBT) because the method employed not only calendar formulas but also basal body temperature to determine fertile and infertile periods.[69]

An advertisement also indicates that some women were using the rhythm method in conjunction with basal temperature measurement. In 1958*, The Kyunghyang Shinmun* published an advertisement for "a thermometer for married women [*puinch'eon'gye*]."

> *You can determine the exact time when you can get pregnant by measuring your body temperature every morning. People who want a baby or contraception can manage pregnancy control [*sut'aejojŏl*] with this thermometer."*

Indeed, the thermometer depicted in the advertisement appears similar to a typical thermometer used to measure other parts of the body. The advertisement does not provide a detailed explanation of how a thermometer can be utilized for contraceptive purposes or to achieve pregnancy. This indicates that the advertiser assumes a certain degree of familiarity with the rhythm method based on body temperature among Korean women.[70]

Abortion, "The Only Way for Family Planning"

Some women opted for more invasive surgical contraceptive technologies. In 1954, an advice column in *The Dong-A Ilbo* published a letter from a husband seeking legal counsel concerning a medical malfunction related to contraception. The husband stated that his wife, aged 32, had elected to undergo contraceptive surgery (*p'iim susul*) following multiple deliveries to protect her health and financial stability after a consultation with a "professional physician." However, she became pregnant the following year. He inquired as to whether he could be compensated by the physician, who had guaranteed the "absolute reliability" of the surgery, but who was now evading responsibility. The counselor and lawyer responded as follows.

> *According to a specialist whom I asked, there is a procedure called fallopian tube binding, one of the "absolute medical contraceptive methods," which prevents pregnancy. Therefore, although it*

[69] Richard J Fehring, "A Historical Review of the Catholic Scientists Who Answered the Call of Humanae Vitae," *Humanae Vitae*, 50 (2019): 147–69.

[70] Puinch'eon'gye, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 2 July 1958.

> *is not clear what kind of surgery your wife had, if the specialist performed an effective procedure, she shouldn't be pregnant.*[71]

Although the reader did not explicitly cite the name of the contraceptive method, the article demonstrates that tubal ligation, a surgical contraceptive method, was already recognized and performed by some physicians in the 1950s.

Another invasive surgical method of contraception in the 1950s was abortion, which was the prevailing method until the early 1990s. Lee Young-ah's study of abortion in newspapers in colonial Korea revealed that women induced abortion through a variety of methods, including ingestion of lye, rat poison, quinine, or castor oil, as well as jumping down from a high place or striking their abdomen. A minority of women sought the assistance of physicians, who provided abortifacients in lieu of surgical abortion.[72] In the 1950s, newspaper reports documented cases of women who attempted self-induced abortions and subsequently died from an overdose of quinine.[73] Additionally, newspapers reported instances of abortions among single women, citing reasons behind their decision to terminate the unintended pregnancies. The reasons for these pregnancies included sexual indulgence, imprudence, and ignorance. In 1954, No Hyŏn-chin, a female physician who worked for Severance Hospital, contributed to an article in *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* about her patients who visited her hospital for unintended pregnancies. The "poor patients" included a girl in her school uniform and sex workers (*yangbuin*).[74] By emphasizing chastity (*chŏngjogwannyŏm*) at the end of the article, the author implied that abortion was sought by immoral women.[75] This resonated with the aforementioned aversion to abortion in public discourse.

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[71] "P'iim susur hu jaeimsinhan kyŏngu ŭisaŭi pŏpchŏkch'aegimyŏha? 避姙 手術後 再姙娠한 境遇 醫師의 法的責任如何? (In Case of Pregnancy after Contraceptive Surgery, Does the Physician Have Legal Responsibility?)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 24 October 1954.

[72] Lee Young-ah 이영아, "1920–30nyŏndae singminji chosŏnŭi "nakt'ae" tamnon mit silje yŏn'gu 1920–30 년대 식민지 조선의 "낙태" 담론 및 실제 연구 (A Study on the Discourse and Reality of Abortion in Korea : 1920s–1930s)," *Ŭisahak* 22.1 (2013): 133–78.

[73] "K'inine mŏkko chungdoksa 키니네먹고中毒死 (Death from Quinine)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 3 December 1956; "Yusansik'iryŏda chŏlmyŏng: k'inine chalmot mŏkko 流產시키려다 絕命: 『키니네』 잘못먹고 (Miscarriage Caused Death from the Misuse of Quinine)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 20 September 1960.

[74] At that time, the term *yangbuin* was used in a derogatory way to refer to sex workers with Westerners, particularly those associated with the U.S. Army.

[75] No Hyŏn-chin 노현진, "Chinch'alssiresŏ: onŭldo ttogat'ŭnmarŭl 진찰실에서: 오늘도 또 같은 말을 (In a Doctor's Office: Today the Same Words Again)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 18 July 1954.

However, other newspaper articles indicate that married women also underwent abortions. As several scholars have observed, abortion was a common practice among married women, particularly middle-class women who could afford to visit doctors.[76] Take the case of Nam, a friend of Chŏng Sŏn-ae mentioned earlier. She underwent multiple abortions (*imshinjungjŏl*) due to her husband's disapproval of "unnatural things."[77] In 1954, *The Chosŏn Ilbo* reported on medical malpractice during an abortion procedure. The author observed, "These days, it has become almost common sense and a trend for intelligentsia women to induce miscarriages due to financial difficulties or other circumstances."[78]

It is noteworthy that abortion was illegal in South Korea from 1953 until 2020. While the Japanese legal system, which exerted considerable influence over the Korean one, permitted abortion for eugenic and economic reasons under the Eugenic Protection Law of 1949, the Korean Penal Code criminalized all abortions. The debate surrounding the proposed legislation to criminalize abortion is remarkable in that it reflected discourses on birth control and women's roles at that time. Upon the establishment of the new assembly in 1954, the Korean lawmakers commenced deliberations regarding the legal status of abortion. The majority of Korean lawmakers expressed support for the proposed legislation that would impose penalties for abortion. Some expressed concern that the legalization of abortion would have a detrimental impact on conventional moral standards. Others argued that the country "should still continue to encourage population growth." Some asserted that abortion is tantamount to the termination of life. Only a few lawmakers endorsed the legalization of abortion, citing the potential for it to alleviate the economic and social challenges that some women encountered. In essence, the majority of lawmakers, regardless of their affiliation with the ruling or opposition party, viewed abortion as a social issue rather than individual women's issue. This perspective was shared by the intellectuals and two political readers who opposed birth control. When twenty lawmakers proposed amendments to the draft criminalizing abortion with no exceptions, the other 107 lawmakers rejected it. Consequently, the law that stipulated women who had abortions and

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[76] Bae Eun-kyung, *In'gan chaesaengsan*, 42–3; Kim Eun-shil 김은실, "Nakt'aee kwanhan sahoejŏk nonŭiwa yŏsŏngŭi sam 낙태에 관한 사회적 논의와 여성의 삶 (Abortion Discourses and Women's Lives in Korea)," *Hyŏngsajŏngch'aegyŏn'gu* 6 (1991): 383–405.

[77] Chŏng Sŏn-ae, "Debates on Birth Control."

[78] "Nakt'aesik'iryŏda sarin ŭisabangmodŭngŭl kusok 落胎시키려다 殺人 醫師朴某等을 拘束 (Abortion Became Homicide: Physician Mr. Pak and Others Were Arrested)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 10 February 1954.

the practitioners who assisted them would be punished regardless of the reasons was enacted in 1953.[79]

Nevertheless, criminal abortion law was nominal in the 1950s. This situation prompted some physicians to attempt to differentiate between artificial abortion (*nakt'ae* or *in'gong imshinjungjŏl*) and birth control or contraception. However, for many Korean women in the 1950s, abortion was not a definitive solution to contraceptive failure but rather one of the few reliable contraceptive options available to them at that time. An Yŏn-sŏn, born in 1924 and married in 1943, recalled the circumstances surrounding abortion as follows.

> *In the past, there was no way to do family planning. Did we have the same contraceptive technology back then that we have today? No. How easily I got pregnant at that time! Abortion was the only way. [I had abortions] Twice. That's the only way. I did once before I had my youngest child and after I delivered them. There was no other option but [abortion].*

As previously discussed, condoms, the rhythm method, and spermicidal tablets were widely circulating and were used by some women at that time. Indeed, An attempted to use the rhythm method, which was based on calculating menstrual periods, but it did not "work well." In this context, her remark that abortion was "the only way" should be interpreted as a reflection of her perception that it was the most reliable and effective method of contraception. An also recalled that the topic of abortion was a common and open discussion among individuals, including within her own children's elementary school in the 1950s. She and other parents would discuss abortion during their visits to the school. Observing their children through the windows of classrooms, they shared "which hospital was the best for abortion."[80]

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[79] Shin Dong woon 신동운, "Hyŏngbŏpkaejŏnggwa kwallyŏnhayŏ pon nakt'aejoe yŏn'gu 형법개정과 관련하여 본 낙태죄 연구 (A Study of the Abortion from the Viewpoint of Criminal Law Reform in Korea)," *Hyŏngsajŏngch'aegyŏn'gu* 6 (1991): 333–81; Criminal Act. Chapter 27. Criminal Abortion (Enacted 3 October 1953), Korean Law Information Center https://www.law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=62390&ancYd=19530918&ancNo=00293&efYd=19531003&nwJoYnInfo=N&efGubun=Y&chrClsCd=010202&ancYnChk=0#0000 [accessed, 20 November 2022]

[80] Kim Eun-kyung 김은경, "Sanŏphwa ijŏn sigi han'guk yŏsŏngŭi mosŏng kyŏnghŏmgwa chŏngch'esŏng: 1940nyŏndae chungban–1960nyŏndae ch'obanŭl chungsimŭro 산업화 이전 시기 한국 여성의 모성 경험과 정체성: 1940 년대 중반–1960 년대 초반을 중심으로 (Mothering Experiences and Identities of Korean Women in the Pre-Industrialization Period: Focused on the Middle 1940's to Early 1960's)," *Yŏsŏnggwa yŏksa* 21 (2014), 156–7.

These women's experiences resonated with the findings of surveys conducted in the 1950s and early 1960s.[81] In 1961, Yun Im-chung, a graduate student at the Public Health College of Seoul National University (hereafter SNU), conducted a survey of 590 women in Seoul, aged 20–55, to ascertain their experiences related to abortion. The results demonstrate a pervasive prevalence of abortion in urban areas. Yun reported that 33% of the respondents had undergone at least one abortion, with 35% of them having undergone multiple abortions. Furthermore, 62% of the respondents who had not ever undergone an abortion indicated that they would consider it in the future. Abortion was a viable contraceptive option for these women, rather than a last resort.[82]

The survey results also indicate that a considerable number of OB/GYNs in Seoul were providing "illegal" abortion services in response to women's demands, as Yun observed. Notwithstanding the criminal abortion law, the government rarely initiated legal proceedings against those who performed abortions. For example, in 1959, *The Chosun Ilbo* reported that an OB/GYN was under investigation due to the death of a pregnant woman and her fetus during an abortion in his hospital. The physician was charged not with the performance of an abortion but with the criminal act of negligent homicide.[83] Even in 1959, *The Dong-A Ilbo* attributed blame to three suspects who had been arrested for blackmailing a woman and the hospital where she had undergone an abortion. The anonymous author conveyed the public's response to the suspects with the following sentence: "Such bastards [*yorŏn nomdŭl*] should be punished." The writer did not condemn either the woman or the medical staff.[84]

These newspaper articles suggest that medical practitioners, including both quacks and bona fide physicians, were involved in the provision of abortions in the 1950s. A 1960 medical article on a method for abortion echoes the perception of artificial abortion among the OB/GYN community. In an article published in 1958 in *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science*, a publication of the Korean Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, female physician Koo Im-hoe reported on cases of abortion in which she

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[81] Cha Ok-hee 차옥희, "*In'gongimsinjungjŏrŭi sahoeŭihakchŏk chosa* 人工姙娠 中絶의 社會醫學的 調査 (Sociomedical Survey on the Artificial Interruption of Pregnancy)" (master's thesis, Seoul National University, 1961).

[82] Yun Im-chung 윤임중, "Sŏulssinae imsinjungjŏrŭi pindo 서울市內 妊娠中絶의 頻度 (The Survey on the Artificial Interruption of Pregnancy in Seoul Area)" (master's these, Seoul National University, 1961).

[83] "Nakt'aesusul t'ach'isa sanbuin'gwawŏnjanggusok 落胎手術타致死 產婦人科院長拘束 (An Ob/Gyn Who Caused Death during Abortion Was Arrested)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 6 January 1959.

[84] "Ssuktŏkkongnon 쑥덕공론 (Gossips)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 5 August 1959.

had performed a short bougie insertion in preparation for the surgery.[85] She cited not only several Japanese references but also Korean references published by Korean authors in the 1950s.

> *While the number of mid-stage abortions has declined, early-stage abortions account for approximately 82% [of all abortions]. People believe that they [early-stage abortions] are simple procedures, and physicians also tend to consider the techniques involved to be relatively simple. Physicians perform [abortions] frequently, which leads to a lackadaisical attitude and unexpected failure. Indeed, the procedure depends on technique and an indirect sense of touch rather than sight, which involves risk. As a result, the operation is restricted to specialists. In addition, because individual cases have different consequences, it is necessary to pay attention. Unfortunately, all OB/GYNs experience failure no matter how careful they are, I think.*

She enumerated the complications associated with abortions and reported the 110 cases of early-pregnancy terminations she had performed over the previous three years, implying that even veteran physicians are not free of anxiety about the surgery. The method she applied involved inserting a bougie with a length of 7–8 cm and a diameter of 0.8 cm for 24 to 48 hours and prescribing 0.2 mg of quinine every two to three hours. The technique itself was not novel. She made it clear that the method to reduce such risks from artificial abortion was suggested by Kim Hong-sun and "it seems that the method is widely used in Korea."[86]

The article presents evidence that certified professionals conducted abortions. For them, like women, abortion was not a secret. They suggested a method to reduce the risks associated with abortion and shared the method and consequences through a medical journal. Chang Yun-seuk, who subsequently became a professor at the Medical College at SNU and introduced laparoscopic tubal ligation in Korea during the 1970s, also recalled the prevalence of abortions among legitimate

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[85] Koo Im-hoe (1915–2012) received her medical degree from Seoul Women's Medical College, which was the predecessor of Chosŏn Woman's Medical Institute, established by an American medical missionary, Rosetta Sherwood Hall in 1928. It was the first medical education institution for women in colonial Korea. After graduation, Koo worked in several positions, including as a lawmaker and the president of the Korean Society for the Mentally Handicapped (now known as the Korean Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities). "[Pugo]Kuimhoe chŏn kukhoeŭiwŏn [부고]구임회 前 국회의원 (Obituary: Former Lawmaker Koo Im-Hoe)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 8 March 2012 https://www.donga.com/news/People/article/all/20120308/44601562/1 [accessed, July 12, 2021]; Korean Association on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities http://www.kaidd.or.kr/main/ [accessed, July 12, 2021]

[86] Koo Im-hoe 具妊會, "Imsinjŏn'giin'gongjungjŏlssie chŏnch'ŏch'irosŏ so bougie sabibŭi ŭiŭi 姙娠前期人工中絶時에 前處置로서 小 Bougie 揷入의 意義 (The Significance of Short Bougie Insertion as Prep Operation for Artificial Abortion in the Early Stage of Pregnancy)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 3.1 (1960): 56–61.

physicians. From 1955 to 1961, he operated a clinic where, according to his own account, “70–80% of patients” sought abortion. His colleague, a fellow graduate from the same medical college, would perform an abortion in “about 10 minutes.”[87]

4.2. New Contraceptives, Imagined Population, and Individual Women

The Onset of the Family Planning Program

On May 16, 1961, Major General Park Chunghee and his military officers overthrew the cabinet of Chang Myŏn. In accordance with Decree 6, they dismissed all political parties and organizations, including the PPFK. The new government assumed control and pledged to address the country’s economic challenges and corruption.[88] This political event marked the advent of an authoritarian government that would remain in power for the following two decades. More importantly, from the perspective of the history of contraceptive technology, the government implemented a national family planning program that would continue for over three decades. This program would shape how Korean women were involved in contraceptive technologies. In the days following the coup, the leaders established the Supreme Council for National Restoration (hereafter SCNR) and a military cabinet, thereby assuming legislative, juridical, and administrative authority. In June, the military junta introduced an Act of the National Restoration Movement and set up the National Restoration Movement Headquarters (hereafter NRMH).[89]

During the transitional period, the NRMH advocated for the promotion of contraception as a component of its campaign for lifestyle modernization. It advocated for the streamlining of attire, ceremonial events such as weddings and funerals, thrift, and family planning. It argued that family planning would avert “fecundity that causes children’s insufficient education, [women’s] health

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[87] Chang operated his clinic under another physician’s license because he worked as an unpaid assistant at SNU due to his desire to perform research, which did not permit him to hold another position. He made a living with the illegal clinic. According to Chang, such illegal clinics were ubiquitous at that time. *Childbirth and Women’s Health*, ed. by Han Keung-Hee and Yoon Duk-young, 209.

[88] Gregg A Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2009), 116.

[89] Heo Eun 허은, “‘5·16kunjŏnggi’ chaegŏn’gungminundongŭi sŏnggyŏk: ‘pundan’gukka kungminundong’ nosŏnŭi kyŏrhapkwa punhwa ‘5·16 군정기’ 재건국민운동의 성격: ‘분단국가 국민운동’ 노선의 결합과 분화 (Characteristics of the Restoration Movement during ‘5.16 military junta’: Combination and differentiation in the roads of ‘a national movement of a separated county’),” *Yŏksamunjeyŏn’gu* 11 (2003): 11–51.

problems, and [personal] economic difficulty."[90] However, during that summer, there were no tangible measures such as the repeal of the contraceptive import ban or the dissemination of knowledge and technology concerning family planning.

The actual transformation in the context of family planning took place behind the scenes and was of consequence to Yang Jae-mo, the board chairman of the PPFK. Despite the official dissolution of the PPFK by Decree 6, Yang assumed a role on the SCNR planning committee on behalf of his senior medical professionals. In June 1961, he submitted a proposal for the FPP, and the planning committee decided on it. Yang stated that the FPP proposal included an estimation that an investment in the FPP for ten years would be paid back fourteen times over by reducing nurturing expenses for a population decline "made a hit" in the SCNR.[91] While a considerable number of Korean intellectuals opposed birth control, the SCNR, founded upon a military coup d'état claiming "economic self-sufficiency and prosperity," facilitated the incorporation of the FPP as one of the measures for a national economic development plan. As Kim Taek-il, an official of the MHSA (1953–1971) and later the director of the Family Planning Institute, observed, the military junta's "courageous decision" transformed a family planning campaign into a national program. In the context of a "revolutionary and political environment conducive to prompt decision-making," the SCNR commanded the MHSA to implement measures for the FPP in June. This resulted in the training of 224 midwives who would be assigned to each health center. This occurred well before the official announcement of the FPP in November 1961.[92]

Following the government's decision on the implementation of the FPP, the installation of public channels for contraceptive knowledge and technologies was initiated. One of the most significant shifts in the advent of the FPP was the transformation of the PPFK, which was approved as an association under the jurisdiction of the MHSA in October 1961. The PPFK assumed responsibility for the promotion of the FPP, the training of field workers, the operation of mobile clinics, the conduct of clinical trials for new contraceptive technologies and research related to the FPP. As Kim Tae-il recalled in 1988, the military junta also considered that a semi-private or semi-governmental association would be an appropriate mediator to implement measures to circumvent "society's sensitive responses" and

[90] "Kungminundong cheilch'a silch'ŏnsahang palp'yo 國民運動 第一次實踐事項 발표 (The First Practices for National Movement Were Announced)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 25 July 1961.

[91] KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 10–11.

[92] KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 31, 33.

"administrative rigidity."[93] Furthermore, as the IPPF had foreseen in 1960, the PPKF would serve as a mediator between local actors and foreign actors, facilitating consultations on the FPP, securing financial resources for research, and providing contraceptive devices and substances.

In December 1961, the military junta revoked the regulation on importing contraceptives, provided that "the Minister of the MHSA had approved them as harmless to human bodies."[94] It is remarkable that just three months prior, the government had prohibited importation of more than fifty items with the objective of fostering and protecting domestic industries since the early 1950s.[95] However, the lifting of the regulation on contraceptives did not result in an immediate increase in contraceptive sales. In an interview with *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* in 1962, a pharmaceutical wholesaler in Seoul indicated that there had been no notable change in contraceptive product sales. He stated that the condom sales remained consistent, whereas sales of "contraceptive medication," which referred to spermicides, had already begun to decline before "family planning was told loudly." He attributed the sales trend to potential users who had "already been using" contraceptives. From his perspective, the only discernible "improvement" since the FPP was that "men, as well as women, came to buy contraceptive things without shame."[96] Although the merchant described the change in the customers as trivial, it reflected a subtle yet significant change in the people's attitudes toward contraception at a practical level. At the very least, people were no longer required to conceal their purchase of contraceptive measures.

In response to the governmental measures, manufacturers also promoted their contraceptive products through public channels, including newspapers. Not long after the government lifted the regulation, two pharmaceutical companies advertised their foam tablets under the banner of family planning, as if they had anticipated the lifting of the ban. On January 16, 1962, Cheil Pharmaceutical Company advertised the Japanese contraceptive Sansi-jelly in *The Chosun Ilbo*.[97] Subsequently, some companies released advertisements for their spermicidal tablets. Dongbo Pharmaceutical Company published an advertisement for "Zero tablet (*Chero jŏng*)" and Yuyu Industrial Cooperation promoted

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[93] Kim Tae-il 김택일, "Han in'guhaktoŭi hoego 한 인구학도의 회고 (A Recollection of a Demography Student)," *Han'gugin'guhak* 11.1 (1988): 1–13.

[94] "P'iimyak tŭng kŭmsuhaeje posabusŏ 8iljaro 피임약등 禁輸解除 保社部서 8 日字로 (The MHSA Will Lift Import Ban on Contraceptives and others as of the 8th)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 12 December 1961.

[95] "51kae p'ummok saero kŭmsujoch'i 51 個 品目 새로 禁輸措置 (51 Items Got Included in the List of Import Ban)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 1 June 1961.

[96] "Kajokkyehoek k'arŭt'e 家族計劃「카르테」(The Family Planning Karte)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 16 April 1962.

[97] Sansi-Jelly, Cheil Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Chosun Ilbo*, 16 January 1962.

its "contraceptive medication," "FP tablets (*Ep'ŭp'I jŏng*)." [98] In the following year, the oral contraceptive pill was introduced. In July 1963, Ilsŭng Pharmaceutical Company advertised Anabora, a contraceptive medication manufactured by the German pharmaceutical company Schering. The Korean company introduced Anabora as an "oral contraceptive medicine with 100% efficacy that married women in the Republic of Korea have desired." At the same time, it claimed that the imported oral contraceptive pill would be effective not only for contraception but also for improving one's appearance and regulating the menstrual cycle. According to its advertising, the pill would be effective for skin conditions, excessive menstrual bleeding, and irregular menstrual periods; in other words, most menstrual irregularities.[99]

In 1962, the MHSA established a single family planning clinic (hereafter FP clinic) in each individual health center across the nation. In each FP clinic, one or two field workers for the FPP (hereafter FP worker) were assigned. The workers, who were referred to as family planning instructors (*chidowŏn,* hereafter FP instructor), held medical certifications such as nurses or midwives. The FP clinics were designed to provide visitors with the knowledge of family planning and contraceptive technologies, including foam tablets, "jellies," and condoms.[100]

Another contraceptive technology that was promoted by FP clinics was vasectomy. At the inception of the program, the medical experts involved in the FPP deemed that this was the most effective contraceptive method. Although the FP clinics did not provide vasectomy service, they referred interested individuals to hospitals that did offer this procedure. For these medical professionals, male sterilization was not only the most effective contraceptive method but also the most reliable method, which had been tested since the late nineteenth century. Tubal ligation was as effective as male sterilization for contraception. Some Korean physicians performed the procedure as early as the 1950s. However, contemporary tubal ligation demanded laparotomy, concomitant general anesthesia, and hospitalization. Otherwise, tubal ligation could be performed during a cesarean section (C-section), which was not a common procedure in the country at that time. In 1970, when the rate of institutional delivery was on the rise, 83% of Korean women gave birth at home. In

[98] Chero Jŏng, Dongbo Pharmaceutical, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 19 January 1962; Ep'ŭp'i jŏng, Yuyu Industrial Cooperation, advertisement, *Chosun Ilbo*, 23 January 1962.

[99] Anabora, Ilsŭng Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 11 October 1963.

[100] In'gujŏngch'aek50nyŏnsap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe, *50years of Korean Population Policy: From Antinatalist [sic] To Pronatalist,* 19–20.

this situation, it was quite uncommon for women to undergo a C-section in a hospital.[101] Consequently, from the standpoint of the experts and bureaucrats in the developing country, South Korea, female sterilization was too costly to be used as a population control measure. In comparison to tubal ligation, vasectomy was straightforward and inexpensive. The procedure required “twenty or thirty minutes” and allowed the patient to “walk freely after the procedure.” Given these situations, in this country, vasectomy was the optimal contraceptive technology for population control.[102]

Despite the preexisting desire for contraception, the FP clinics did not function well. In February 1963, *The Chosun Ilbo* criticized the government for superficial approaches to the FPP. The article reported that the FP instructors at health centers were merely distributing “contraceptive medications and devices” without sufficient instruction, which the author likened to the “dispensing of rice.” The author presented a negative evaluation of the FP workers. Some people asserted that FP workers were “riding the gravy train.” However, the author did not concur with this viewpoint. Instead, the author noted social obstacles that contributed to some FP field workers committing “inadvertent sabotage.” Even couples who visited an FP clinic, particularly in rural areas, “were reluctant to speak about sexual issues with others.” This presented a challenge for the field workers, who were instructed to suggest contraceptive methods based on the “husband’s preference and the woman’s body.”

The anonymous author inadvertently revealed that disparate demands and requests from the same contraceptive technologies were made depending on the sociocultural context surrounding users in various locations. While those who had previously used spermicides and condoms in Seoul purchased these products without embarrassment at pharmacies due to the FPP, potential users of contraceptive technologies in rural areas were requested to visit a public health center. Furthermore, they were required to divulge their intimate lives to a field health worker. In this sense, it is unsurprising that the FP clinics failed to attract a significant number of visitors. The number of contraceptive products distributed and the number of men who underwent vasectomies between 1962 and 1963 through the FP clinics is remarkable. Despite the aforementioned demands and requests from the technologies, a considerable number of people desired contraceptives and obtained them through the government channel. In 1962, 60,000 boxes of condoms were distributed, and in

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[101] Shin Jae-chul 신재철 et al., “Han’gugŭi punmanyangsange kwanhan koch’al (III)- punmanjangso mit kŭ kaejojaŭi pyŏnch’ŏn 한국의 분만양상에 관한 고찰(III)- 분만장소 및 그 개조자의 변천 (Changing Patterns of Childbirths in Korea(III)),” *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 32.5 (1989), 600.

[102] 『人口爆彈』의 安全辨 家族計劃 이모저모 (Various Sides of Family Planning: A Safety Valve for the Population Bomb),” *Dong-A Ilbo*, 19 November 1962.

1963, the number distributed exceeded double that amount.[103] During the same period, the government provided free vasectomies for men who had more than three children and lived below a certain income threshold. As a result, in 1962, 34,000 men received a vasectomy through FP clinics, and in 1963, 20,000 men did the same.[104]

The Lippes Loop in Physicians' Hands

While existing contraceptive technologies were already available on the market and distributed through the FP clinics in health centers, a new contraceptive technology was being tested in South Korea circa 1962: the Lippes loop. The Lippes loop, named after its inventor, American gynecologist Jack Lippes, is an IUD. Indeed, it was not a novel technology. In the 1920s, German physician Ernst Gräfenberg had already demonstrated the concept of IUDs to prevent conception by inserting a device into the uterus with his Gräfenberg Ring, which consisted of star-shaped coils of silkworm gut. In the 1930s, Japanese physician Ōta Tenrei(太田典礼) proposed the Ota Ring, which was a modified version of Gräfenberg's device, featuring three curving inner spokes. However, physicians lost interest in these early IUDs for various reasons, including concerns that the metal IUDs might cause pelvic inflammation.[105]

By the 1950s, however, some technological and social conditions in the United States led some physicians to rediscover the potential of IUDs. The advent of antibiotics rendered inflammation a treatable condition. The evolution of malleable plastic allowed for the straightforward insertion of IUDs and ensured their retention in the uterus.[106] While these material conditions were relatively subordinate, albeit still important, the primary motivation for the resurgence of interest and the development of new IUDs was the pervasive and influential concern about population explosion. This concern prompted some physicians and leaders of international population organizations to focus on IUDs as "an inexpensive, low-maintenance method" for long-term use.[107]

Jack Lippes was one such physician. In the late 1950s, as the head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the State University of New York in Buffalo, he devised a loop that was "like an S

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[103] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 381.

[104] KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 117.

[105] Frühstück, *Colonizing Sex*, 147; Caroline Rusterholz, "Testing the Gräfenberg Ring in Interwar Britain: Norman Haire, Helena Wright, and the Debate over Statistical Evidence, Side Effects, and Intra-Uterine Contraception," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 72.4 (2017): 448–67.

[106] Tone, *Devices and Desires*, 265.

[107] Watkins*, On the Pill,* 135.

continued in a lower, smaller S." This was a modified device of existing IUDs such as the Ota Ring. The device was composed of "low density, 0.9202, polyethylene, which had been blended with barium sulfate for X-ray visualization." In 1959, he initiated clinical trials of his loop on his patients. With the support of the PC, Pathfinder Fund, and the Western New York Medical Foundation, Lippes expanded the trial to 1,713 patients at the clinic of the Planned Parenthood Center of Buffalo between November 1961 and June 1964.[108]

It is noteworthy that by that time the first oral contraceptive pill, Enovid, from G.D. Searle & Company, had been proven to be efficacious, albeit with some side effects, and had achieved considerable market success. Following its approval by the FDA in 1960, Enovid experienced significant commercial success in both the American and European markets.[109] This prompted other pharmaceutical companies that had previously been skeptical of oral contraceptive pills to reconsider their stance on such medication, which demanded a daily dosage for individuals without any diseases.[110] Nevertheless, the triumph of the oral contraceptive pill did not result in the cessation of interest in the development of IUDs. Conversely, physicians and the leadership of international population organizations deemed IUDs to be a more appropriate contraceptive technology than oral contraceptive pills for women in developing countries. They believed that oral pills did not fit the poor women, as there was a concern that they would lack the "sustained motivation." Guttmacher, the president of the Planned Parenthood Federation, articulated his aspirations for IUDs and their potential users: "We can hope she [women] will forget it's there and perhaps in several months wonder why she has not conceived."[111]

This aspiration facilitated Lippes' clinical trial and the subsequent approval of the Lippes loop. With the backing of the PC, which also financed Marulas' spiral, Dr. Lippes was able to initiate a clinical trial involving patients from the Planned Parenthood Center of Buffalo and his own patients, despite concerns about "such radical research."[112] The results of the loop trials were deemed satisfactory by the leaders of the international organization, leading to the decision to proceed with overseas clinical

[108] Jack Lippes, "Contraception with Intrauterine Plastic Loops," *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 93.7 (1965): 1024–30.

[109] Watkins, *On the Pill*, 32.

[110] Andrea Tone, "Medicalizing Reproduction: The Pill and Home Pregnancy Tests," *Journal of Sex Research* 49.4 (2012): 319–27.

[111] Watkins, *On the Pill,* 70.

[112] Jack Lippes, "The Making of the First Loop," *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology* 219.2 (2018), 204.

trials in developing countries including Taiwan, Pakistan, India, Jamaica, and South Korea.[113] The South Korean trial of the loop, which was funded by the PC and the Pathfinder Foundation, commenced in 1962.[114] Between December 1962 and February 1964, two thousand women who had visited two university hospitals at SNU and Yonsei University, as well as one missionary mobile clinic, underwent the insertion of the new plastic IUDs.[115]

These trials of the new contraceptive method resonate with those of the first oral contraceptive pill, Enovid, which was developed in an American laboratory and subsequently tested on women in Puerto Rico for FDA approval in the late 1950s.[116] While the trials on Puerto Rican women were considered "trials" of new contraceptive technology, the loop trials in Korea between 1962 and 1964 were more akin to a pilot program for the mass distribution of the loop. As medical historian Park Seung-Mann notes, the government decided to "distribute" the loop in the middle of trials as one of the measures for the FPP. The decision was made in accordance with the shift in the First Five-Year Economic Development Plan, the first of the government's grand economic development plans (1963–1996). In 1963, the Economic Planning Board (hereafter EPB), which assumed the establishment and management of general plans and relevant budgets, revised the development plan due to a lack of budget. The EPB included the aggressive promotion of the FPP as a means of reducing population pressure among the seven principles for the revised development plan.[117]

In the wake of the alteration in economic policies, the MHSA initiated a series of measures in September 1963. In the following month, the ministry proceeded to establish the Team for Maternal and Children Health (*mochapokkŏn*) within its own structure, subsequently elevating it to the Division for Maternal and Children's Health. The division proposed a plan to reduce the population growth rate from 2.9% in 1960 to 2.5% in 1966 and 2.0% in 1971. Following several discussions, the MHSA and EPB confirmed the plan. In order to achieve this objective, it was necessary for the government to

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[113] "The Second International Conference on Intra-Uterine Contraception, New York City, October 2–3, 1964: Summary," *Studies in Family Planning* 1 6 (1965), 13. As cited in, "Pokkanggyŏngŭi kisulssa," 35.

[114] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 124; Han-su Shin et al., "Result of the Clinical Research on I.U.D. in Korea (韓國에 있어서의 子宮內避姙裝置의 臨床的研究 結果)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 9.5 (1966): 211–22.

[115] Shin Han-su 申漢秀, "Chagungnaejangch'ie ŭihan sut'aejojŏl: ruup'ŭ p'iimbŏbŭl chungsimŭro 子宮內裝置에 의한 受胎調節: 루우프 避妊法을 中心으로 (Contraception Control by Intrauterine Contraceptive Devices)," *Taehanŭihakhyŏphoeji* 7.6 (1964): 541–45.

[116] Watkins*, On the Pill,* 30–31.

[117] "Ogaenyŏn'gaebal samch'anyŏn'gyehoek kibonbanghyangŭl kyŏljŏng 五個年開發 三次年計劃 基本方向을 決定 (The Fundamental Direction of Third Year Plan of the Five-Year Development Was Decided)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 14 June 1963.

guarantee that 45% of women between the ages of 20 and 24, or those of the fertile population, were using contraceptives by 1971.

The Lippes loop was identified as a significant, economic method to achieve the stated goal. In February 1963, at the meeting of the Finance Committee in the Assembly, Kim Hak-ryŭl, the vice minister of EPB, introduced the plastic loop. In presenting the small plastic contraceptive device to the committee, he demonstrated its effectiveness in the context of limited financial resources. He stated that a loop "with an 88 percent success rate" in contraception costs 20 *won to* manufacture in South Korea and could be used for two years. While lawmaker Park Kyŭ-sang articulated his concern about the possible side effects of the loop, in turn, the plan for mass distribution of the loop was confirmed. The final objective was to insert 70,000 loops in 1964, a figure that had been reduced from the three million initially proposed by the Minister of the MHSA as a result of negotiations.[118]

However, distributing the simple and inexpensive contraceptive device in South Korea proved to be challenging. Spurgeon M. Keeny, the PC's Resident Representative for Southeast Asia and senior American advisor to the FPP, described the situation: "The organization of a supply line for loops looks like a simple matter, but it is not."[119] Since the PC had decided to provide Lippes loops for only twenty thousand cases in the trials, the MHSA was compelled to prepare an additional fifty thousand loops to achieve the desired outcome. Despite the PC's resolution of the Lippes loop's patent issue and provision of primary materials, polyethylene and barium, the standardized manufacturing process for the device, which remained in the trial phase, had yet to be established. Consequently, Kim Taek-il, the MHSA official responsible for supplying the loops, initiated the manufacturing of fifty thousand loops based on the specifications outlined in the relevant literature. Kang Shin-ho, Kim's fellow graduate of SNU Medical College and the founder of Dong-A Pharmaceutical, provided assistance.

The loops were manufactured in an unstructured manner. The initial stage of the process entailed the combination of the provided polyethylene (80%) and barium (20%) in a plastics factory. At the National Job Training Center for Boys, the mixture was poured into an injection molding machine, which was introduced by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Finally, a nylon string was affixed to the tip of each plastic material composing the device.[120] While different loop sizes were being tested in South Korea, the preliminary supply line yielded only one mold of the 27.5mm of the Lippes loop, presumably due to a lack of manufacturing capacity or budget. Jack Lippes

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[118] KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 75–76.

[119] Spurgeon M Keeny, "Korea and Taiwan: Two National Programs," *Studies in Family Planning*, 1.6 (1965): 1–6.

[120] KIHSA*, The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years,* 36–37.

approved these devices, noting that "They were not made of the best possible materials, and from moulds [*sic*] lacking the fine precision desirable," but "passable" until "better ones could be made." In 1964, tens of thousands of the loops, shipped from the United States or manufactured in South Korea, were prepared for insertion into Korean women's bodies, following t the bureaucratic decision and the inventor's approval.[121]

In conjunction with the production of new technology, the government deployed a cadre of specialized mediators who would connect contraceptive technology with potential users. Instead of waiting for couples at a health center, the mediators would embark on village visits and contact people in rural areas. It is important to note that the decision to visit people was not solely the result of a top-down, bureaucratic decision-making process. In the inaugural FPP national meeting in 1963, Kim Kyŏng-suk, one of the two FP field workers in Yeongi County, stated that she used to visit farms in which she assisted farming to contact and "educate" women in rural areas who were too busy to contact in the daytime by visiting their house. However, given the fact that only one or two field workers were assigned to each health center in a city and a county, the number of people that they could contact through such means was minimal compared to the population in the areas. As Kim Kyŏng-suk aptly noted, "Two FP instructors to cover one county" was "overwhelming." Thus, she, like other field workers, called for more increase in the number of instructors.[122]

Korean experts reached a similar conclusion through a pilot program called the Koyang Study. The pilot program was conducted among residents in Koyang County between October 1962 and September 1963. It was aligned with several pilot programs for family planning initiatives conducted in developing countries, including India, Tunisia, Turkey, and Ceylon.[123] The PC proposed and financed the study, and Yang Jae-mo and Bang Sook at Yonsei University launched an investigation into the knowledge, attitudes, and practices, known as KAP, related to conception. Through interviews with 1,000 couples, they surveyed "the level of fertility, the ideal family size, the family planning limitation factors, the prevalence of conception control, and the attitude towards the use of contraceptives."[124]

[121] Until Jack Lippes and Paul Bronnenkant, American manufacturers of the loop, traveled to carry the mold for their products and to give some advice to local manufacturers in other counties including Korea in 1964, the loop were made based on only literature and poor capability of local plastic industry. Keeny, "Two National Programs," 3.

[122] "Kajokkyehoek nongch'onŭi silt'ae 家族計劃 農村의 實態 (The Reality of the Family Planning in Rural Areas)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 2 July 1963.

[123] "Korea: The Koyang Study," *Studies in Family Planning* 1.2 (1963): 7–9.

[124] Sook Bang, Man-Gap Lee, and Jae-Mo Yang, "A Survey of Fertility and Attitude toward Family Planning in Rural Korea," *Yonsei Medical Journal* 4.1 (1963): 77–102, 77.

Wondang Myeon in Koyang City, Gyeonggi Province was selected as the subject area, while Kimpo Myeon in the same province was designated as the control group.[125] In Wondang Myeon, each female nurse in one or two villages was tasked with providing an "intensive educational and clinic service." The results indicated that 55.5% of husbands and 56% of wives expressed a desire to "practice contraception," with younger couples exhibiting a greater inclination toward this. "The lack of knowledge and instruction" was "one of the major barriers" to solving the problem, the authors concluded.[126] From the perspective of these experts, it is logical to allocate more field workers in order to provide not only contraceptive technology but also comprehensive knowledge of it in rural areas.

In accordance with the experts' conclusion, the Ministry of Home Affairs employed 1,473 field workers for the FPP in each Eup and Myeon in 1964. These workers were designated as *kachokkyehoek kyemongyowŏn* (hereafter FP village worker). Consequently, each village in rural areas had more than one FP village field worker. The PPKF also employed field workers called *kyemongwŏn,* who were assigned to work at PPKF branches in some cities. Whereas the FP instructors (*chidowon*) at health centers were required to possess a medical license as nurses or midwives, the standard for the village field workers was less rigorous. The minimum qualification for the FP village field workers was a midwifery or nursing certification, or a high school diploma, and it was preferable that the candidate be a native of the region in which they would be assigned.[127]

The initial task of these field workers was to disseminate knowledge and technologies related to contraception from an FP clinic in a health center to people in rural communities. However, in practice, their role went beyond being just messengers. Instead, they were compelled to step into people's daily lives and make people use contraceptives. The experience of FP village field worker Kang Im-ja demonstrates the sociocultural conditions that such field workers confronted and, indeed, Korean women faced. Following two years of work experience as an instructor for women in rural areas, Kang commenced her second career as an FP field worker at the age of 22 in 1964, coinciding with the government's imminent designation of FP village workers in rural regions. Upon visiting villages, she was met with indifference and even insults, with some calling her "a woman who makes people not have babies." This aversion to family planning was pervasive, particularly in rural areas. Some women

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[125] Along with Eup, Myeon is a South Korean administrative district smaller than a town and larger than a village.

[126] Sook Bang, Man-Gap Lee, and Jae-Mo Yang, "A Survey of Fertility and Attitude toward Family Planning in Rural Korea," 97–100.

[127] Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea(PPFK), *Han'gukkajokkyehoeksimnyŏnsa 한국가족계획십년사 (The History of the Korean Family Planning Program for Ten Years)* (Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea, 1975), 61.

Year	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
The number of the loops	1,493	106,397	225,951	391,687	323,452	263,132
Year	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
The number of the loops	285,500	295,100	293,680	299,902	325,875	341,618
Year	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
The number of the loops	343,907	297,872	281,796	240,871	188,734	188,393

Table 4-1.The number of the Lippes loop insertion through the FPP (1963–1980). Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, In'gujŏngch'aek 30nyŏn 人口政策 30 年 (The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years) (Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, 1991), 117–8.

rejected her not because they disliked contraception but because there were alternatives. When she attempted to persuade some women to use preventive contraceptives, some women said that "abortion is better."[128]

The Lippes Loops in Women's Bodies

How did women respond to the Lippes loop, the inexpensive and efficacious contraceptive technology that had been a source of great enthusiasm for leaders of population organizations and economic bureaucrats? The number of loop insertions through the FPP exceeding the initial goal indicates that a considerable number of Korean women accepted the technology. As documented by the PPFK, over 100,000 loops were inserted in 1964 alone, 225,000 loops in 1965 and 391,000 in 1966. [Table 4-1][129] Physician Kwak Hyŏn-mo of Yonsei University Medical College recalled that he conducted loop insertions on "about 250–300 [women] a day."[130] At a glance, this was the very manifestation of what the advocates of IUDs as a tool of population control had anticipated. In his 1969 book *Birth Control*, Guttmacher appraised a physician who recorded "seventy-five insertions in three hours" in Hong Kong and described the procedure as a division of labor on an assembly line. Had Guttmacher been in South Korea, he would have paid the same tribute to "gynecological Taylorism," as exemplified by Kwak and his team.[131]

[128] "Kajokkyehoek kyemongwŏn 가족계획 계몽원 (A Family Paining Field Worker)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 26 February 1968.

[129] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 117–18.

[130] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 352.

[131] Takeshita, *The Global Biopolitics of the IUD,* 33–34.

It is important to note, however, that the aforementioned record was not representative of the total number of Lippes loop users. An article on 9,738 women from the Lippes loop trials and early distribution cases in 1962–1965 indicates that a number of women discontinued use of the contraceptive. The article, authored by Shin Han-su, a professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at SNU and chairman of the Medical Committee at the PPFK, and other researchers, reported that 390 women experienced expulsion. While 909 users removed the loops for "medical reasons" including bleeding (42%), pain or backache, intermittent vague lower abdominal cramps, and pelvic pain (41%), infection (11%), and discharge (6.3%), 255 users removed the loops for "personal reasons," unrelated to these medical issues.[132] In these cases, women inserted three different sizes (24 mm, 27.5 mm and 30 mm) of the loop provided by the PC. In contrast, the majority of Korean women inserted the one-size loop manufactured by the Korean government. This indicates that in practice, those who inserted the one-size, relatively crude loop, may have experienced expulsion and side effects more frequently and may have ceased using them due to these experiences.

A monthly feature of the magazine *Happy Home* in 1976, entitled "Contraception through the Loop," provides a detailed account of the personal reasons behind the decision not to use or to cease using the loop. The pages contained the voices of women, observed by a physician and written by the women themselves, albeit in a somewhat indirect manner. In the feature, Kim Seung-wook, the head of the OB/GYN department at SNU Hospital, conveyed the stories of women who removed the loops and deplored the situation in which "the loop is falsely accused of being the cause of every disease."

> *Many women shook their heads as soon as they heard of the word loop, as if they were about to experience uterine bleeding, infection, or backache. Some even refused to hear about it, saying that they had seen many people who got weak after the loop insertion. I was able to change their minds with an explanation that the loop never causes that, but some came back to ask for the loop's removal after a few days. They said they had lost their appetite and had indigestion. In summer, when skin gets tanned, some women who had been fitted with the loop for several months asked for it to be removed, arguing that their freckles came from the loop's effect. It doesn't end there. Some removed the loop, claiming that it caused them to gasp for breath due to a sense of pressure on their chest and that they had difficulty cooking due to dizziness.*

Although he characterized the women as absurd, the descriptions provide evidence of the prevalent rumors regarding the side effects among women. In other sections of the same feature, women who expressed positive views about the loop indicated that they had minimal experience with

[132] Shin et al., "Result of the Clinical Research on I.U.D.," 39.

the side effects associated with it. This also reflects the pervasiveness of such side effects, and the related concerns. It is worth noting the contribution of Hong Kyŏng-sun, a user of the loop, in this context. She wrote that “the side effects [of the loop] turned out to be nonsense for me.”[133] Although she did not provide a detailed account of the side effect, this suggests that she was aware of them, which could include a slight increase in vaginal discharge or an uncomfortable sensation. The effects were dependent on each individual body’s response to the technology. The decision to accept the loop was more dependent on women’s interpretation of how their bodies responded to the device than on physicians’ observation.

In this context, the numerous loop distributions could be regarded as an indication that, despite potential changes to their bodies, a considerable number of women opted to insert the loop into their uteri. The users were not ignorant of the side effects: they shared information about side effects that they had experienced themselves or heard about from their friends and neighbors. As American oral contraceptive users did, they accepted not only the technology per se but also what the technology demanded and requested such as bearing side effects.

An article published in 1966 on the use of the loop among women in rural areas provides an illustrative example. The author, physician Seo Gang-gi, analyzed reports of 800 women who had inserted the loop between February 1966 and October 1966 in Gyeonggi Province, Hwaseong County. The author reported that 18.6% of the women in the area experienced side effects, including bleeding, backaches, an increase in menstrual bleeding or vaginal discharge within six months after the insertion. The author did not report the number of women who continued to use the device despite experiencing such bodily changes. However, the author indicated that 10.1% of the loop users removed the loop for “medical reasons,” which referred to side effects or other reasons approved by medical experts. The discrepancy between this figure and the aforementioned percentage of women who experienced side effects suggests that a considerable number of women continued to use the loop despite the side effects.[134] Even after the side effects of the plastic loop became a public issue circa 1966 and consequently the government decided to distribute oral contraceptive pills in 1968, a

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[133] “Idarŭi t’ŭkchip: rup’ŭ p’iimbŏp 이달의 특집: 루프 피임법 (A Monthly Feature: Contraception Through the Loop),” *Happy Home*, October 1976, 23–32.

[134] Seo Kang-gi 서강지, “Ilbu nongch’onjiyŏgesŏŭi roopp’iimsisure taehan sahoeŭihakchŏk yŏn’gu 一部 農村地域에서의 Loop 避妊施術에 對한 社會醫學的 研究 (A Socio-medical Study on the Intrauterine Device in a Rural Area),” *The Journal of Public Health* 3.2 (1966): 145–52.

considerable number of women continued to use the loop, sometimes enduring some side effects but doing so willingly.[135]

For the women, the loop represented a more effective and economical contraceptive method, although it was not a perfect contraceptive. For instance, Han Chŏng-hŭi, who identified herself as a housewife, presented her experience as a loop user, including its side effects, in a short essay titled "Economical and Safe Contraception through the Loop for Four Years" in the magazine *Happy Home.*[136] Subsequent to the birth of her second son, she and her husband reached an agreement regarding contraception and began searching for a contraceptive suitable for the couple. Her husband stated, "We are too young to block permanently; it would be regrettable." This indicated his rejection of a vasectomy. Therefore, she selected the "safe and economical loop," which allowed temporary, reversible contraception. She lauded the efficacy of the loop, stating that there was "no accident" during her use of the loop. Nevertheless, she also implied some changes in her body: "Whenever I felt even a small thing happened on my body (for example, intermenstrual bleeding or skipping [a menstrual period]), I went to a health center."[137]

The term "economical," as used by Han Chŏng-hŭi on multiple occasions, indicates that among Korean women, the loop was considered an inexpensive contraceptive method. In the 1960s and 1970s, Korean women could have the loop inserted at no cost at health centers and FP clinics affiliated with the PPFK. However, the absence of cost was not the sole factor contributing to the popularity of the loop. Women had access to alternative contraceptive methods, including condoms and spermicides, through the FP clinics and FP field workers who regularly visited their villages.

For many users, the loop represented a more appealing option than other contraceptive methods, such as condoms and spermicides, which demanded and requested cooperation of both partners during each instance of sexual intercourse. As Andrea Tone notes, this was a significant factor in the decision of American women who had previously relied on condoms to embrace the oral contraceptive pill, which contributed to the pill's popularity despite skepticism among pharmaceutical

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[135] KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 117–18.

[136] The magazine *Happy Home* was published as a guide for the Family Planning Mother Club, which was a local mothers' club organized by the government to promote FPP since 1968, as I will discuss in the next section. Although its major contents were knowledge of family planning, it conveyed information about contraception as well as readers' pages, medical columns, novels, and cartoons like other ladies' magazines, albeit in a rather didactic tone.

[137] Han Chŏng-hŭi 한정희, "Ch'ehŏmsugi: kyŏngjejŏgigo anjŏnhan ruup'ŭ p'iim 4nyŏn 체험수기: 경제적이고 안전한 루우프 피임 4 년 (My Experience: Economical and Safe Contraception Through the Loop for Four Years)," *Happy Home*, February 1971, 27.

companies.[138] However, for many Korean women, these demands and requests extended beyond mere irritating manipulation or interruption of intercourse. In the context of a general lack of support for contraception among Korean husbands, the Lippes loop allowed its users to practice contraception at their own discretion. In South Korea, prior to the government's introduction of oral contraceptive pills in 1968, these medications were not accessible for women in low-income classes or rural areas. Consequently, until the advent of oral contraceptive pills' mass distribution, the loop represented the sole contraceptive option available to these women, who could choose to use it on their own, although it demanded the assistance of medical practitioners at a health center.

Women's experiences and surveys indicate that a significant proportion of Korean women have chosen the loop as a contraceptive technology that allowed them to conceal their contraception from their husbands and, in some cases, mothers-in-law. In a 1972 workshop where leaders of a mother's club for family planning convened, Shin Kyŏng-gŭn, a leader of a mothers' club in a village, commented that, "The loop is the secret method that only women know about in the event of their husbands or mothers-in-law opposing family planning itself."[139] A 1973 survey on women's contraception echoes this observation. The survey revealed that 57% of the respondents practiced "family planning" without their husbands' knowledge, and one in ten loop users concealed the use of the loop from their husbands.[140]

In *Happy Home* 1976, Kim Jŏng-suk, who identified herself as a housewife, articulated a comparable and more nuanced experience of her loop use. Subsequent to a premature birth and the loss of the infant ten days later, she gave birth to a son the following year. Two years later, she gave birth to her second son and opted for contraception without consulting her husband. She visited a health center to have the loop inserted. Upon her disclosing her loop insertion to her husband, he expressed support for her decision, "contrary to her expectations." She continued to use the loop until she eventually received approval for a tubal ligation from her mother-in-law.[141]

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[138] Tone, "Medicalizing Reproduction."

[139] The mother's club was organized to promote the FPP in 1968. Each club consisted of a leader and several mothers, and sometimes single women in a village. I will examine the club in the next sub-section. "Kajokkyehoegŭi hyŏnjang 家族계획의 現場 (The Scene of the FP)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 14 December 1972.

[140] Chung Kyung-kyoon 정경균, *Punyŏjojik kusŏng mit kwallijich'imsŏ : kajokkyehoegŏmŏnihoeyŏn'gu 부녀조직 구성 및 관리지침서 : 가족계획어머니회연구 (Guide for Organization and Management of Female Organization: A Study on the Family Planning Mothers' Club)* (Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea, 1987), 13.

[141] Kim Chŏng-suk 김정숙, "Haengbogŭi munt'ŏgesŏ 행복의 문턱에서 (At the Gate of Happiness)," *Happy Home*, October 1976, 33.

While the loop allowed contraception based exclusively on the user's discretion, the technology demanded insertion into the user's uterus, a procedure that women were incapable of performing independently. IUDs were designed as a relatively simple device from the perspective of physicians, rather than from that of the women. Consequently, potential users of the loop were required to visit an FP clinic at a health center. Given the insufficient transportation infrastructure in rural areas at the time, numerous women in these areas were unable to fulfill this requirement. In 1963, the country had a total of 189 health centers, with an average of approximately 1.35 health centers per county. The majority of these facilities were situated in or near urban areas.[142]

However, from a different perspective, women were able to use the loop with a single visit to a health center or practitioner. This possibility was identified by the experts involved in the FPP, and, in 1964, the government initiated a pilot program for mobile FP clinics. In these clinics, practitioners were able to insert the loop in a specially equipped van, thereby addressing the issue of accessibility to a health center. The pilot program was staffed by a physician, a nurse, a field worker, and a driver with a van stocked with medical appliances, broadcasting equipment, and projection devices for the promotion of the FPP. As with other programs in the FPP, international organizations provided support. Several international organizations, including the IPPF, PC, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), USAID, and the Asia Foundation provided vehicles and assisted with operational costs, enabling the deployment of mobile clinics to begin covering rural areas from 1968 onwards.[143]

[142] Park Yun-jae 박윤재, *Han'gukhyŏndaeŭiryosa 한국현대의료사 (The History of Medicine in Contemporary Korea)* (Tŭllyŏk, 2021), 98–100.

[143] The Asia Foundation, nonprofit international development organization, was founded in 1954 by several prominent figures in the field of foreign affairs, including T.S. Peterson, the CEO of Chevron, formerly Standard Oil of California, Paul Hoffman, the first administrator of the Marshall Plan in Europe, and several university presidents in the United States. KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 79–80; PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 414–45.

Figure 4-1 A poster for the Family Planning Program to promote the Lippes loop, circa 1966. National Museum of Korean Contemporary History.

The developers and advocates of the IUD initially conceived of women in developing countries as ignorant and having low motivation for contraception. In the imagery, the women would have the loop inserted into their machine-like bodies and forget about it. However, South Korean women were unable to disregard the device in their corporeal bodies and its associated responses, which could be severe. Some women did not accept the loop or its potential side effects. They did not attempt to insert the loop. Some inserted the device but removed it after observing how their bodies responded. Some accepted the technology and its demands: bearing changes in their bodies. In the absence of compelling motivations for contraception and of the sociocultural context surrounding them, it is challenging to comprehend the active loop users. In this regard, a poster in the 1960s to promote "the loop" was relevant. The poster distributed by the MHSA features a smiling woman wearing traditional Korean-style clothing and holding a baby girl. The poster depicts a mother contemplating the S-shaped loop, with a boy in a state of jubilation beside her. The poster for family planning, without a husband and father, asserted that "the loop contraceptive method is efficacious, economical, with no harm,

and can be discontinued at any time should the desire for having a baby arise." [Fig 4-1][144] This implied that the technology allowed contraception with women's own discretion.

Oral Contraceptive Pills as Alternative to the Loops

In November 1966, the issue of the side effects of the Lippes loops was finally addressed in the assembly, the same venue where, three years prior, the vice minister of the EPB had proudly proclaimed the economic benefits of the contraceptive device. The Committee on Health and Social Affairs posed the issue of the adverse health effects associated with the IUDs and proposed a reduction in the overall budget allocated for loop insertion. Kim Sŏng-chŏl, the head of the committee, stated, "The adverse effects of the loop are a significant concern that cannot be ignored, and I have considered requesting experts to investigate the matter." One of the expert advisors on the committee, Cho Yŏng-sŏn, noted that an increasing number of women were experiencing the side effects, which included fever, back pain, and bleeding. This led to a situation where "only sixty out of one hundred women who had the loop inserted kept it for one year." He further asserted that the loop was causing more problems among women in rural areas due to the demands of farm work. They were not able to get appropriate treatment for the side effects in a hospital in time. Some lawmakers questioned the necessity of the FPP itself. For example, Yi Wŏn-man, a member of the ruling party, argued that Korea would face a shortage of low-wage workers, citing the situation in Japan. Consequently, these inquiries prompted a reduction of approximately half of the initial budget for the loop insertion.[145]

The news of the budget cut perplexed the physicians involved in the FPP, who had previously promoted the loop as the most appropriate contraceptive method for Korean women. Yang Jae-mo and Shin Han-su, dismayed at the news, criticized lawmakers for confusing the number of women who experienced the side effects with those who ceased to use the loop, or what they termed "close-out." These experts asserted that this term encompassed not only instances of removal due to the adverse effects, but also instances of removal due to pregnancy plans, "personal reasons," and "natural expulsion." In addition, the experts posited that women in rural areas were too impoverished and preoccupied with farming to adhere to the daily regimen of the contraceptive pill, which requires its

[144] The Family Planning Program, Minister of Health and Social Affairs, poster, circa 1966, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History https://www.much.go.kr/L/RWMdfn4nb0.do [accessed, 22 November 2022].

[145] National Assembly Secretariat, Assembly Proceeding of the Sixth Assembly, The 58th Round, the 21st Session of the Health and Social Affairs Committee Meeting, 1966; KIHSA, *The History of Population Policy for Thirty Years*, 38–39.

use for twenty days. They also highlighted the risk of "primitive" abortion to which "many women resorted" and its "adverse outcomes," including bleeding during surgery, anemia, habitual miscarriage, and even uterine cancer. In this context, they contended that despite the potential side effects, the loop "remains an ideal" contraceptive method for women in rural areas and is a superior alternative to abortion.[146]

In contrast to this public endeavor to justify the suitability of the loop as a contraceptive in the Korean context, the government was already aware of the removal issue. In 1964, the government commenced efforts to identify an alternative to the loop. It is noteworthy that the government's approach to the issue was primarily focused on the high rate of close-out cases, rather than on the underlying women's health issues associated with adverse effects. Oral contraceptive pills were selected as an alternative to the loop. In May 1964, the MHSA convened the Family Planning Commission for the distribution of oral pills. Funded by the PC, the PPFK requested that three institutions conduct trials on South Korean women.[147] One of the trials was conducted as a part of a pilot study, the Seongdong Gu Action Plan, led by Kwon E-hyock at SNU. As John P. DiMoia notes, the pilot program's lessons shaped the subsequent approach of the FPP including the methods of oral pill distribution since 1968.[148]

In this context, it is instructive to examine a study of 511 women who discontinued using the loop for "medical reasons" and consented to a trial of oral pills in Seongdong Gu.[149] From July 1964 to October 1966, the women were provided with Ovulen-21 oral contraceptive pills manufactured by G.D. Searle & Company, a booklet titled *The Oral Contraceptive Pill*, and visits from field workers who would consult with them and teach them how to use the pill.[150] The pill users were instructed to take each hormonal tablet to suppress ovulation for 21 days, as indicated by the name of the medication, and to refrain from taking any further pills for seven days. The 21-day period and the seven-day "pill-free period" constituted one cycle. The study's designers required women to visit FP clinics in health centers to obtain a new pack for 40 won (14 U.S. cents). The results indicated that the side effects of oral pills were more prevalent at the beginning of their use, and that women required multiple cycles to become accustomed to taking them.

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[146] "「Rup'ŭ」 sisul sibi 「루프」 施術 是非 (A Debate on the Loop Procedure)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 7 December 1966.

[147] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 133.

[148] DiMoia, *Reconstructing Bodies*, 113.

[149] *Gu* is an administrative division and corresponds roughly to a ward or district.

[150] During the seven-day "pill-free period," pill users would experience bleeding called "withdrawal bleeding," which is distinct from normal menstruation. Some oral pills contain sever placebo pill, or reminder pills, during the pill-free period.

To address the issue of side effects at an early stage, the study's designers proposed a strategy of "active contact" through field workers' "visiting their homes" and women's visits to an FP clinic. The workers were responsible for monitoring whether women were adhering to the medication regimen and reporting any side effects at the early stages. In the context of rural areas, "far from health centers or the FP clinics," the researchers proposed that local mothers' clubs or the heads of a village, known as *i-jang*, assume the responsibility of distributing the pills and providing instructions to local mothers. Furthermore, they ensured that the forthcoming national pill distribution program must be designed in a manner that does not impede the distribution of the loop, the "cheaper IUDs." Therefore, they suggested limiting pill distribution to those who have ceased using the loop.[151]

Despite initial skepticism from the government and those involved in the FPP regarding the feasibility of a mass distribution of oral contraceptive pills in the context of the Korean economy and society, foreign support facilitated its implementation in 1968. This support came from Northern Europe, specifically Sweden. While most Western countries were hesitant to intervene in population issues of non-Western countries due to concerns about population explosion, the Swedish government took a different approach to the global population issue. In 1958, the country initiated the world's first bilateral family planning program with Sri Lanka, marking the advent of Sweden's direct population policy aid for developing countries.[152]

In 1965, the Swedish government initiated an effort to engage with the Koreans involved in the FPP. Ernst Mickneck, the commissioner of the SIDA, contacted Korean bureaucrats during his attendance at the Western Pacific Regional Conference of the IPPF, which was held in Seoul. The following year, Carl Wahren, an officer of the SIDA, met with Yang Jae-mo, who was visiting the United States as a visiting professor. These endeavors culminated in the 1967 accord, in which the Swedish government pledged "collaboration in the field of family planning" with South Korea. In accordance with the request of the Korean government, the agreement stipulated the provision of 1.3 million cycles of oral contraceptive pills. In addition to the pills, the SIDA provided eight mobile units for clinical services, training, and information activities, as well as thirty vehicles for transportation related

[151] Kwon E-hyuk 권이혁 et al., "Tosibuine issŏsŏ mŏngnŭn p'iimyak pogŭbe kwanhan yŏn'gu 都市婦人에 있어서 먹는 避妊藥 普及에 關한 研究 (A Study in Acceptability and Effectiveness of Oral Pills with Women Resident in an Urban Area: Based on a Program Directed Towards Women Having Discontinued Use of Intra-Uterine Contraception Loops in Sungdong gu [*sic*], Seoul, Korea)," *In'gumunjenonjip* 6 (1968): 3–48, 6.

[152] Sunniva Engh, "The Conscience of the World? Swedish and Norwegian Provision of Development Aid," *Itinerario* 33.2 (2009): 65–82.

to the FPP. These were used for the mobile clinic program focusing on rural areas that had been previously discussed. Furthermore, the SIDA furnished papers for the magazine *Happy Home,* which had been published to promote the FPP since 1968, between 1969 and 1975.[153]

The distribution of the oral pills as a part of the FPP largely reflected the recommendations set forth by the designers of the Seongdong Gu Action Plan. The pills were distributed through existing FP clinics, field workers, and local mothers' groups in rural areas under the name of the Family Planning Mothers' Club (hereafter FPMC). As the government continued to prioritize the Lippes loops, only women who had discontinued using the loop were able to rely on the distribution program. In order to receive oral pills, they were required to pay a nominal fee (40 won). The program helped women in rural areas, who were largely unaware of the presence of the contraceptive, in using the pills, as will be examined.

In 1968, approximately 17,900 FPMCs were established in every Eup and Myeon in the South Korean countryside. The designers of the pilot program recommended that the mothers' clubs encourage women to continue taking oral contraceptive pills, particularly during the early stages when side effects were apparent, and to supply pills. However, the organizers of the club planned a group that would go beyond those who provide pills and monitor its users. This objective was articulated in a book written by the PPFK:

> *Goal: By transforming the FPP into a grassroots public movement, the FPMC seeks to cultivate an environment in which all fertile women can practice family planning and improve maternal abilities, thus fostering the FPMC as a core of regional development and subsequently a front organization for human and social development.*[154]

The ambitious goal was relevant to Ryu Dal-yung, who served as the head of the PPFK from 1967 to 1971. While the PPFK had been primarily led by physicians and physicians-turned-bureaucrats such as Kim Taek-il, Ryu, as he himself emphasized, was the first non-physician head of the association.[155] He was an activist. He had participated in a series of social reform campaigns, such as the National

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[153] Ministry of Government Administration, Bureau of Parliamentary Affairs, Division of Parliamentary Affairs, "A Submission of an Issue for a Cabinet Meeting: An Agreement between the Republic of Korean Government and the Sweden Government for the Collaboration in the Field of Family Planning," 1967, National Archives of Korea, Reference No.BA0084513.

[154] PPFK, *The History of the Korean Family Planning Program for Ten Years*, 87–8.

[155] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 328–30.

Restoration Movement led by the NRMH in the early 1960s, since the colonial era in Korea.[156] The planners of the FPMC scheme, including Ryu Dal-yung, considered that family planning alone was insufficient to provide continuous motivation to individual groups. They anticipated that the FPMC would empower a select group of women who had already been practicing "family planning" despite opposition from "non-accepters." This term indicated women who did not practice contraception as well as parents-in-law and husbands who opposed contraception under the "traditional" norm. In 1966, as a preliminary step, the government employed 139 assistant administrators to organize, instruct, and manage the FPMC through a test phase and assigned them to each county. Their duties included contacting the heads of each designated village and requesting their assistance in coordinating the FPMC organization within their respective villages.[157]

It is important to note that, despite its administrative and top-down origins, women's desires for contraception and better lives were the primary driving force behind the FPMCs' unwavering and collective efforts. These desires shaped the contraceptive choices of members, as well as their personal lives and villages. While some clubs were organized by the FP field workers, the assistant administrators, and the village heads, some were initiated by women themselves. Some of the women were leaders of another women's group. For example, in Sŏlhwa Village, Kyungsang Province, the FPMC organizer was O Ul-ki, who was already an active leader of a local group. She had previously served as the leader of two government-organized local groups a few years prior. In 1968, when the FPMC was organized in her village, she, at age 38, grappled with "how to improve their household and village by women." For her, the formation of the FPMC represented an opportunity to organize women and engage in collective action publicly. The FPMC in Yukye Ri, Chŏnra Province, was established in opposition to the elder in the village, where the premodern *yangban* class retained a significant influence. This indicated that the village had a more conservative and patriarchal culture than other villages. Thus, merely convening women was "a great challenge to tradition and deviation from the norm." Initially, approximately ten members of the group had to gather secretly.[158]

It is also noteworthy that a significant proportion of FPMC leaders had previously used contraceptive technologies, preceding the establishment of the FPMCs and even preceding the announcement of the FPP in 1961. One such individual was the aforementioned Yi Sun-ku, a Chukchŏn

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[156] Kim Dong Sun 김동선, "Sŏngch'ŏn ryudaryŏngŭi saengaewa minjogŭisik 星泉 柳達永의 생애와 민족의식 (Sung Chun Yu, Tal-Young's lifetime and national consciousness)," *Sungsilssahak* 31 (2013): 287–327.

[157] Chung Kyung-kyoon, *A Study on the Family Planning Mothers' Club*, 8–9.

[158] Chung Kyung-kyoon, *A Study on the Family Planning Mothers' Club*, 15, 58–59, 68–69.

Ri FPMC leader and the inaugural award-winning FPMC leader. Upon the birth of her ninth child, she chose to practice contraception, using the "menstrual period method." She also began to encourage other women in her village "not to have babies" like her. In this sense, she was one of the regional activists for the family planning movement prior to the establishment of the PPFK. She recalled, "At first, (…) people said that having babies was their business, not mine, and they teased me, suggesting that my many deliveries might have driven me insane." It is therefore unsurprising that she was willing to join the FPMC in her village and was elected as its leader. With the government's virtual approval of her family planning campaign, she began more actively persuading others not only to practice contraception but also to improve their village. This included the construction of a mothers' center as well as the cultivation of carp.[159]

Some leaders of the FPMC served as exemplars in the use of new contraceptive technologies. O Wul-ki, a leader of an FPMC, became the second user of a loop in her province "as soon as she learned the word 'loop.'"[160] Kim Chŏng-cha, a leader of the FPMC in Mohyŏn Village of Chŏnra Province, attempted "almost all" contraceptive methods, including the rhythm method, condoms, oral contraceptive pills, and the loop. Additionally, she frequently visited a health center, "as if it were [her] parent's house." In 1973, she was interviewed by a journalist from the *Chŏnbuk Ilbo* for the magazine *Happy Home*. At that time, she had been using the loop, having previously experienced nausea during her two years of pill use. The journalist provided the following description of her and her club members: "If she takes the pill, the members follow her, and if she uses the loop, they do so. She is a mirror and live specimen of family planning."[161] This seems to be an exaggerated panegyric. Nevertheless, it indicates that her experiences as a user of several contraceptives and her close association with the public health center provided her with sufficient practical knowledge, which enabled her to assist her neighbors and members of the FPMC in selecting a certain contraceptive technology and identifying alternatives. Some members of the FPMC sought to assuage concerns about the potential side effects of vasectomy by presenting their husbands' and neighbors' experiences with vasectomies. In one instance, members of the FPMC in a village successfully persuaded a "philanderer" with eighteen

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[159] "Illyŏn tongan tan han myŏngŭi agido nach'i anhŭn maŭri ittanŭnde," *Happy Home*, January 1974, 16.

[160] Chung Kyung-kyoon, *A Study on the Family Planning Mothers' Club*, 63; "Sobi chohabŭro saltchinŭn kajokkyehoek ŏmŏnihoe 消費조합으로 살찌는 家族計劃 어머니회 (The FPMCs Became Wealthy Through Consumers Unions)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 28 November 1970, 5.

[161] "Pogŏnsorŭl ch'injŏngjipch'ŏrŏm tŭnadŭnŭn ŏmŏnihoe 보건소를 친정집처럼 드나드는 어머니회 (Members of a Mothers' Club Visiting Health Center like Their Mother's Home)," *Happy Home*, February 1973, 30.

children to undergo a vasectomy. His successful vasectomy procedure has dispelled other villagers' concerns that vasectomy would reduce sexual energy, which was one of the common rumors about vasectomy.[162]

While some members of the FPMC were in favor of contraception, another, more important motivation was the desire to improve their lives. Similar to O Wul-ki and Yi Sun-ku, enthusiastic leaders of the clubs encouraged the members to set aside communal funds. In general, such mothers' funds were accumulated by discreetly collecting a spoonful of rice at each meal, as most women in rural areas were not economic decision-makers in the household at that time. Some enthusiastic leaders and members accumulated their funds through the sales of products such as saccharin or stainless steel dishes as well as through employment as day laborers. These funds served as the initial capital for the improvement of members' households, the village as a whole, and the strengthening of their solidarity.[163] Consequently, the FPMCs provided some opportunities for women, particularly those passionate leaders who desired contraception and sought social and economic activities, which were largely forbidden to women at that time. At the same time, the collective economic efforts furnished a conduit for persuading others on the contraceptive issue. For example, Pak Kŭm-sun, the president of the FPCMs in Ŭisŏng county, delineated how they had surmounted the elders, the most formidable adversaries of family planning in local communities, by hosting parties for them using the savings of the FPCM in the village.[164]

The distribution of the oral contraceptive pill had ramifications in the market that extended beyond the boundaries of local communities. Following the release of Anabora by Ilsŭng Pharmaceutical Company in 1963, a number of companies entered the oral pill market in South Korea. In 1966, Yuhan Yanghaeng launched Lyndiol, a product of Dutch Organon, and in 1967, Paeksu Pharmaceutical Company introduced Ortho-Novum, a product of American Ortho Pharmaceutical. As public health experts involved in the FPP did, the companies considered the contraceptive pills suitable for young, middle-class women in urban areas. In general pharmacies, the cost of the pill was approximately 270 won per package, which represented a significant financial burden at the time,

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162 "Ŏmŏnidŭri marhanŭn 'ŭrijip kajokkyehoek'," *Chosun Ilbo*, 18 September 1975, 5.

163 Chung Kyung-kyoon, *A Study on the Family Planning Mothers' Club*, 69–71.

164 Chung Kyung-kyoon, *A Study on the Family Planning Mothers' Club*, 72; "Ŏmŏnidŭri marhanŭn 'ŭrijip kajokkyehoek' 어머니들이 말하는 '우리집 家族계획' (Mothers' Voices: Our Home Family Planning)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 18 September 1975, 5.

given that the average monthly wage of a household did not reach 8,500 won until 1965.[165] An advertisement for Lyndiol in 1966 indicates the potential users the company targeted. The advertisement asserted that the oral contraceptive medication exhibited “precise efficacy, simple usage, and portability,” and that it was a “guaranteed key to happiness.” While the advertisement reiterated the official FPP slogan, “Let’s have the proper number of children and raise them well,” the illustration in the advertisement differed from the depiction in the MHSA poster for the Lippes loop, which used the same slogan. The illustration depicted a small family comprising a father in a dress shirt holding up a female infant and a mother holding a young boy.[166]

Within a few years of the government’s mass distribution of oral pills, pharmaceutical companies initiated a strategic shift in their marketing approach, targeting different user groups. An illustrative example is an advertisement from 1969 for the oral contraceptive pill Ovaral, which was introduced as Opura by Youngjin Pharmaceutical Company. The advertisement promoted the contraceptive pill, manufactured by Wyeth Pharmaceuticals in the United States, with the catchphrase “new wave of contraceptive pills.” In the advertisement printed on the front page of *The Chosun Ilbo*, a Korean woman wearing her hair in a chic bob inquired, “What complaints about contraceptive pills do you have?” She asserted that Opura was the solution to all of the following complaints: “Opura, a 0.5 mg contraceptive pill, has the lowest level of progesterone, which is the fundamental cause of side effects.”[167] In the same year, Yuhan Yanghaeng promoted its Lyndiol as follows: “Let’s have the proper number of children and raise them *economically* [*alttŭrhage*]!” The advertisement stated that “Lyndiol fits Korean women’s constitution [*ch’ejil*],” thereby targeting those who had experienced or heard of the side effects of oral contraceptive pills as the Opura advertisement did.[168] These changes were partly due to the gradual increase in the average household wage, which reached 11,750 won in 1966.[169] However, as the remarks on side effects imply, these potential users of these contraceptives

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[165] Statistics Korea. “「Kagudonghyangjosa」: P’ummokpyŏl kagudang wŏlp’yŏnggyun kagyesuji 「경제활동인구조사」: 품목별 가구당 월평균 가계수지 (Economic Active Population Survey: Monthly Averages of Household Income and Expenditure by Item) https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1L60022&conn_path=I3%0A [accessed, 12 October 2022].

[166] Lydiol 22, Yuhan Yanghaeng, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 19 March 1966.

[167] Opura, Youngjin Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Chosun Ilbo*, 28 June 1969.

[168] Lydiol 2.5, Yuhan Yanghaeng, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 20 March 1969.

[169] Statistics Korea. “「Kagudonghyangjosa」: P’ummokpyŏl kagudang wŏlp’yŏnggyun kagyesuji 「경제활동인구조사」: 품목별 가구당 월평균 가계수지 (Economic Active Population Survey: Monthly Averages of Household Income and

came to include not only wealthy urban women but also women who experienced or were concerned about the side effects of the oral contraceptive pill distributed by the government.

In this context, the distribution of contraceptive pills provided women with contraceptive technology itself, as well as experience and knowledge of the technology's use. Since the early 1970s, the PPFK has also recommended oral contraceptive pills, which was not an alternative to the loop rather one of equivalent options. In the 1972 *Happy Home*, the pill was recommended as the first option in a feature article on various contraceptives. In the article, physician Kwak Hyun-mo asserted that the pill "has the lowest failure rate," "does not cause severe side effects," relieves some menstrual symptoms, and makes "couples' lives stable and their personalities cheerful."[170]

A considerable number of pills distributed by the government were leaked into the market. In 1969, an article in the *Maeil Business Newspaper* reported that a considerable number of women discontinued using the pills because of the side effects. Furthermore, it was revealed that no fewer than 4,000 cycles of Oiginon, which was provided by the SIDA, were distributed into the market illegally. The article deplored the fact that the FPP was "clouded by a dark shadow."[171] Chong Eŭl-byŏng's 1973 short novel reflects this reality. In the story titled *Changing Scenery*, Dae-sik, a married man in a rural area, resents his wife's use of contraceptives. Even the oral pills that his wife discarded due to their side effects evoke his displeasure, prompting him to sell them.

> *He went into a pharmacy. "…I'm not here to buy medicine…I'm here to sell." With a glance, the pharmacist noticed. "You mean contraceptive pills. I don't buy such things." Dae-sik began to sweat. "I'll sell them cheap." Whether his suppliant demeanor moved the pharmacist or not, Dae-sik managed to run out of the store with 400 won crumpled in his hand. "…bastards…who sell for 150 won gave just 40 won…"*[172]

Expenditure by Item) https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1L60022&conn_path=I3%0A [accessed, 12 October 2022].

[170] "T'ŭkchip: tangsinege kwŏnhago sip'ŭn p'iimsisul 특집: 당신에게 권하고 싶은 피임시술 (A Monthly Feature: The Contraceptive Methods That We Recommend," *Happy Home,* February 1972, 7–15.

[171] "Kajokkyehoege amyŏng 가족계획에 암영 (The Shadow That Clouds the FPP)," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 15 September 1969.

[172] Chong Eŭl-byŏng 정을병, "Pyŏnhaeganŭn p'unggyŏng 변해가는 풍경 (Changing Scenery)," *Munhaksasang*, December 1973, 80–89.

In 1971, Oiginon's suggested price was 230 won, while in 1974, Lyndiol's price was 260 won.[173] It can therefore be reasonably concluded that some women would purchase and use the 150-won Oiginon, which was more affordable than other contraceptive pills. While some women discontinued using the oral pills distributed by the governmental program that were incompatible with their bodies and sold them in a pharmacy, some benefited from purchasing them at a lower price than the suggested price. In this sense, the outflow of contraceptive pills donated by the SIDA provided an opportunity for women and pharmacists rather than casting a shadow. The novel *Changing Scenery* captured the evolving landscape of contraceptive technologies in rural areas during the 1970s. It illuminates the complex intertwining of boundaries between rural and urban areas, as well as between private business and the governmental FPP. This intertwining will be examined in the following section.

4.3. Designing the Ideal Family

Introduction of Inexpensive Female Sterilization

In the early 1970s, laparoscopic tubal ligation was introduced in South Korea. Similar to the IUDs, the procedure was rediscovered due to the global population control movement. The laparoscope, which had previously been employed for diagnostic and biopsy purposes through small incisions, first attracted the attention of European and American physicians in the 1930s. In the 1960s, some OB/GYNs began to consider the potential of a laparoscopic sterilization procedure and developed techniques and methods for it.[174] Although the precise techniques employed in the procedure vary according to several factors, the general laparoscopic tubal ligation surgery is conducted as follows: The surgeon makes small incisions in the abdominal wall, either on or below the navel. Once the abdominal cavity has been inflated with gas to provide visibility for the procedure and to avoid injury to other organs, the surgeon inserts a laparoscope through the incision, and then binds or cuts the fallopian tubes, which are passageways through which an egg is released from an ovary and travels to the uterus. Consequently, it prevents the connection of the egg and male sperm, thereby providing contraception.[175] In comparison to previous abdominal tubal ligations, the laparoscopic method using

[173] Schering Corporation, Oiginon, advertisement, *Happy Home*, January 1971; Yuhan Yanghaeng, Lyndiol, advertisement, *Sunday Seoul*, 26 May 1974.

[174] Park Seungmann, "Technological History of Laparoscopy," 92–97.

[175] Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, "Tubal ligation," https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/treatment-tests-and-therapies/tubal-ligation [accessed, 23 June 2024].

a laparoscope is a less invasive procedure that does not demand general anesthesia but rather local anesthesia, and a brief convalescence period.[176]

The pioneer who contributed to the establishment of this procedure was Clifford R. Wheeless Jr. at the School of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University (hereafter JHU). With the support of USAID, which sought to disseminate the procedure to developing countries, he made the procedure less expensive and more applicable by modifying techniques and the laparoscope. In 1973, JHU established JHPIEGO (Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics) Corporation, which would provide training in laparoscopic tubal ligation to practitioners in developing countries.[177] Since 1973, Korean physicians have participated in the JHPIEGO specialty course program. In some instances, the participants were provided with the expensive devices for the procedure, such as laparoscopes and electrocautery equipment upon returning to South Korea. Following the establishment of a training course in affiliated institutions in South Korea by JHPIEGO in 1975, more Korean physicians were able to learn the procedure without the necessity of travel abroad.[178]

Nevertheless, it took several years for Korean women to accept laparoscopic tubal ligation as a viable contraceptive option. Despite the procedure being modified to be simpler and less expensive than the previous one in the 1960s, the contraceptive technology must be performed by trained OB/GYNs and requires a laparoscope, an expensive, intricate device. In other words, the contraceptive technology demanded that its users visit a hospital, which was equipped with the necessary specialized staff and tools. In this context, the surgical contraceptive method differed from the Lippes loops, which could be inserted almost anywhere, even in mobile clinics or a room in a private residence not only by physicians but also by nurses and midwives. For a significant proportion of women in rural areas, which were characterized by a paucity of medical infrastructure, visiting a hospital was a challenging undertaking. In 1975, the majority of medical facilities and personnel were concentrated

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[176] Clifford R Wheeless, "Outpatient Laparoscope Sterilization under Local Anesthesia," *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 39.5 (1972): 767–70; Clifford R Wheeless and Bruce H Thompson, "Laparoscopic Sterilization: Review of 3600 Cases," *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 42.5 (1973): 751–58.

[177] Park Seungmann, "Technological History of Laparoscopy," 99–103, 111–14.

[178] Department of the Obstetrics and Gynecology, College of Medicine, Seoul National University, *Sŏuldaehakkyo ŭigwadaehak sanbuin'gwahakkyosil 60nyŏnsa 서울大學校 醫科大學 産婦人科學敎室 60 年史 (60 Years of Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, College of Medicine, Seoul National University)* (Department of the Obstetrics and Gynecology, College of Medicine, Seoul National University, 2006), 106.

in urban areas, with 84% of medical facilities and 81% of medical workers located in cities.[179] A complaint by Cho Chŏng-hŭi, a leader of an FPMC in a small village in Chungcheong Province, illustrates the challenges women in rural areas encountered in accepting this demand. She described how restricted access to medical facilities in her village hindered her neighbors' ability to procure the surgical contraceptive. "People in our village know that sterilization is convenient, but they could not afford it." She noted that for the villagers engaged in ginseng farming, a 24-kilometer journey to a hospital for sterilization was a "big task." Consequently, rather than undergoing a tubal ligation, her neighbors were using the Lippes loop, oral contraceptive pills, and condoms.[180]

However, for the majority of Korean women who sought the surgery, the more challenging demand from the technology was the financial burden associated with the technology. In 1973, when the procedure was first introduced in South Korea, the cost was approximately 20,000–30,000 won, which equated to 50–74% of the average monthly household wage for that year. Despite the increase in the average wage as a consequence of the country's rapid economic development, the surgery still cost between 30 and 45% of the monthly wage in 1975.[181] Even with the use of a 5,000-won coupon issued by the FP clinics, the procedure remained expensive. In 1973, physician Kwak Hyun-mo at SNU Hospital shared his experience with a teacher who had undergone a laparoscopic tubal ligation at the cost of 15,000 won (the cost minus personal expenses, hospital charges, and the cost of supplies). This news prompted her colleagues at her school to inquire about group discounts for the same operation.[182] This demonstrates the aspiration of women for the new permanent contraceptive technology and the economic burden it posed.

Kim Sun-im's essay *Happy Home* provides a comprehensive account of the ways in which the advent of the new technology and its associated economic demands shaped women's technological choices. Kim was a housewife with a journalist husband, one daughter, and one son. She was prompted to pursue the procedure after learning about the surgery in a hospital. At that time, she was using the contraceptive pill, which she considered the best contraceptive method among those she had already attempted. She was unable to accept the "convenient condoms," which made her

[179] Yeh Min-Hae 예민해, "Nongch'onjiyŏk pyŏngŭiwŏnŭi unyŏngsilt'ae 農村地域 病醫院의 運營實泰 (Investigative Study on the Status of the Management of Medical Facilities in Rural Area)," *Kyŏngbugŭidaeji* 19.2 (1978): 174–82, 174.

[180] "Tchidŭn kanan pŏtko sŭngja maŭllo 찌든 가난 벗고 승자 마을로 (A Triumphant Village over the Long-Lasting Poverty)," *Happy Home*, April 1977, 40–41.

[181] Statistics Korea, Kagyedonghyangjosa 「가계동향조사」 (Trend of Household Income and Expenditure Survey) https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1L60003&conn_path=I3 [accessed, 4 November 2022].

[182] "Saero kaebaldoen nan'gwansusul 새로 개발된 난관수술 (New Tubal Surgery)," *Happy Home*, April 1973, 8–11.

feel unnatural (*ijilgam*) and caused her entire body to tense up, reminiscent of the adage "scratching an itching foot in a shoe." She inquired of her husband and a close neighbor whether they felt the same, but both responded in the negative. She thought that it might be due to the "poor domestic condoms" and thus attempted to procure American condoms. However, she was unable to obtain the desired contraceptive, so she attempted to use the Korean condoms with spermicidal jelly. Her husband found this combination disagreeable, and thus, she discontinued the use of condoms that were unsuitable for her body and "could not but use the loop."

Her insertion of the loop resulted in heavy bleeding for several days. However, it allowed Kim, whose husband had contracted tuberculosis, to practice contraception. Over time, she became less distressed by the bodily changes from the loop and experienced no pain for three years. However, her regular menstrual cycle ceased. It turned out to be the result of a pregnancy—the failure of the loop. She underwent her second abortion with minimal reflection. Indeed, she did not explicitly mention her first abortion. However, her description of the procedure as "unlike the first one" implies that it was her second abortion, which partially explains her expeditious decision to undergo the second abortion. Following the abortion, she began using oral contraceptive pills. She considered it "convenient" and even found its unexpected advantages, including a reduction in menstrual blood and the length of a menstrual period, and the establishment of a regular and precise menstrual cycle. Concurrently, she began to experience weight gain, bloating, and excessive vaginal discharge, which prompted her to visit the hospital, where she was informed about laparoscopic tubal ligation. Despite her husband's assertion that her bodily changes were psychogenic reactions, and her partial agreement with this viewpoint, the changes were nevertheless a physical reality that she directly experienced.

It is therefore unsurprising that she was drawn to laparoscopic tubal ligation, which "required no abdominal operation, hospitalization, or side effects." Her confidante, who had lost her only son, cautioned her against the irreversible nature of surgery, yet Kim remained undeterred. The only thing that made her hesitant was the cost. She wrote: "It [the procedure] was not urgent enough to pay 20,000 won." As her husband evaded her "indirect" suggestion of a vasectomy, she postponed the surgery, enduring "uncomfortable pills" for over a year until she ultimately underwent a tubal ligation in 1977.[183]

[183] Kim Sun-im 김순임, "Tŭlgukhwanŭn nŭtke hwaltchak p'inda 들국화는 늦게 활짝 핀다(2) (Wild Chrysanthemums Blossom Late)," *Happy Home*, April 1977, 62–67.

In contrast, in rural areas, some women who desired the new, expensive permanent contraception were able to resort to regional communities. In 1975, a financial program for laparoscopic tubal ligation was initiated in Cheongwon County. The program was proposed by Kwŏn Hyŏk-chŏl, a representative of the regional agricultural cooperative in the county.[184] The program enabled women to undergo the procedure at significantly reduced cost of 5,000 won. Once a woman had opened an installment savings account in the regional agricultural cooperative, the cooperative would guarantee 10,000 won and an FP coupon issued by a health center would cover 5,000 won. The program resulted in 302 women undergoing laparoscopic tubal ligation in 1975 and 1976. It is noteworthy that the program was endorsed by a private clinic whose owner and physician agreed with the program based on their personal relationship with Kwŏn.[185] This case illustrates that some clinicians began to recognize not only women's desires for contraception but also an opportunity for their interest. It also predicted what would happen when such a financial support would be provided to clinicians at a national level soon. This will be examined in the following sections.

Women's desire for economical female sterilization was also evident in the popularity of another tubal ligation procedure, known as mini-laparotomy or mini-lap. The procedure was developed by physicians who recognized the challenges associated with laparoscopic tubal ligation, which impeded its implementation in developing countries, as evidenced by the experience in South Korea. Laparoscopic tubal ligation was considered too sophisticated and expensive to be feasible for individuals in developing countries, which constituted the primary target population for the global population control movement. Accordingly, an alternative female tubal ligation procedure was developed that is more suitable for implementation in less developed countries. This procedure, considered "the most practical technology (…) in most settings," involves a minor incision beneath the umbilicus.[186] The surgeon makes an incision in the suprapubic region and elevates the uterine fundus

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[184] An agricultural cooperative was founded in 1957 based on Agricultural Cooperative Act to support agriculture through agricultural instruction, economic programs, and mutual aid programs. Reginal Agricultural Cooperatives provided instruction and functioned as a bank in rural areas.

[185] "Chŏkkŭmdŭlgo nan'gwansusul pannŭn puindŭl 적금들고 난관수술 받는 부인들 (Women Getting Laparoscopic Surgery Through Installment Saving)," *Happy Home*, January 1977, 50–51.

[186] Korean OB/GYN Bai Byoung-choo who worked at Seoul Red Cross Hospital also paid attention to similar tubal ligation without laparoscope. Even he conceived some techniques and a uterine elevator, which he named *Bai's IT elevator* and obtained a patent for. However, he did not publish his study until 1975, and indeed, his suggestions failed to draw the attention of Korean physicians. Bae Byung-ju 배병주, "*Poksiksojŏlgaenan'gwanburimsul* 복식소절개난관불임술 (Tubal Sterilization via Suprapubic Small Incision Using Newly Designed Uterine Elevator)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 18.5

with a specialized instrument. Subsequently, the fallopian tubes are extracted and secured, then returned to their original position. This relatively straightforward procedure can be conducted not only by physicians but also by paramedic personnel.[187] The procedure was trialed and implemented in developing countries, including Bangladesh and Thailand. The South Korean government also contemplated the possibility of implementing this procedure in South Korea. In 1975, Kim Seung-wook, the head of the medical college at SNU, visited Ramathibodi Hospital at Mahidol University in Thailand with the objective of learning the mini-lap technique and of introducing the procedure officially in South Korea.[188] In 1975, the cost of a mini-lap was approximately 10,000 won, which was considerably less than the 20,000—30,000 won charged for a laparoscopic tubal ligation.[189] With a 5,000 won FP coupon from a health center, the cost for the mini-lap could be reduced.

This less expensive tubal ligation procedure had attracted some Korean women. Ch'a Gyŏng-hŭi underwent a mini-lap surgery after learning about it from one of her high school classmates. Prior to becoming pregnant with her second child, she and her husband used condoms. Following the birth of their second child, the couple decided to limit their family size to two children, utilizing permanent contraception. She underwent a mini-lap surgery at a large hospital.[190] Through collective action, some women mitigated the significant financial demand for the procedure. Enthusiastic members of an FPMC in Suwon City organized a group to support one another with mini-lap surgery. The group, known as mini-lap *kye,* a Korean form of a rotating savings and credit association, consisted of six

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(1975): 307–19; Park Seungmann 박승만, "Sŏnjin kisurŭl hyangan yŏlmanggwa chŏkchŏngsŏngŭi yŏkchŏn: 1960–80nyŏndae han'gugŭi pokkanggyŏng-miniraep kisul kyŏngjaeng 선진 기술을 향한 열망과 적정성의 역전: 1960–80 년대 한국의 복강경-미니랩 기술 경쟁 (The Desire for Advanced Technology and the Reversal of Appropriateness: The Technological Competition between Laparoscopic Sterilization and Mini-Laparotomy in 1960–80s South Korea)," *Ŭisahak* 31.1 (2022): 263–96.

[187] J Joseph Speidel and M F McCANN, "Minilaparotomy—a Fertility Control Technology of Increasing Importance," in For *Presentation to the Advances in Planned Parenthood Physicians 14th Annual Meeting*, November 11–12, 1976, Miami Beach, Florida (A.I.D. Reference Center Room 1656 NS, 1976), 37.

[188] Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of College of Medicine at Seoul National University, *60 Years of Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 106.

[189] Na Gŏn-yŏng 나건영, "Pokkanggyŏngburimsusuriran paekkopkŭnch'ŏjŏlgae nan'gwan chabamae 腹腔鏡不姙手術이란 배꼽근처절개 卵管 잡아매 (Laparoscopic Sterilization by Binding a Fallopian Tube Through an Incision Around the Belly Button)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 17 May 1975.

[190] "Nanŭn irŏk'e nan'gwansusurŭl haetta 나는 이렇게 난관수술을 했다 (My Tubal Ligation Experience)," *Happy Home*, August 1976, 26–27.

women who sought the procedure. The group members collectively funded the cost of the surgery and underwent it in rotation.[191]

In 1977, the government made the decision to prioritize tubal ligation as a contraceptive technology in the FPP and announced an increase in the subsidy for laparoscopic tubal ligation. This decision was made not only to encourage women to undergo the procedure but also to persuade clinicians who had previously been reluctant to perform the procedure to do so. Clinicians thought the previous 5,000-won subsidy "wasn't worth it." This prompted the government to implement a "rationalization" of the subsidy. Additionally, the government designated several hospitals, situated in Seoul and in three provinces, primarily university hospitals, to conduct training workshops for tubal ligation. The workshops included a two-week program for laparoscopic tubal ligation and a one-week program for mini-lap.[192] After completing the training program and demonstrating the requisite equipment, including a laparoscope, physicians were eligible to apply for a "designated hospital" for the FPP. Following governmental approval, they were permitted to claim a subsidy for each contraceptive procedure performed.[193]

Women who desired the surgery but lacked the financial resources, such as Kim Sun-im, responded promptly to these measures. One day, Kim heard an announcement from the community center that the "laparoscopic tubal ligation procedure was available for a fee of only 5,000 won." She hastened to the community center, where approximately thirty women had already gathered for the same reason. The following day, she accompanied her husband to a clinic, where he expressed reservations about her decision. Despite her own apprehension, she attempted to remain calm and was able to undergo the surgery, reminding herself of previous experience when she had "endured abortions without anesthesia."[194]

Kim Sun-im's emotional response is noteworthy in that it demonstrates another demand or request from tubal ligation: the fear of surgery. Despite the subsidy reducing the economic demands

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[191] "Ŏmŏnihoe sŏnggongŭi yŏlssoenŭn wŏnmanhan taein'gwan'gye 어머니회 성공의 열쇠는 원만한 대인관계 (Interpersonal Relationship: The Key to Successful Mothers' Club)," *Happy Home*, 1975, 12–13.

[192] "Hop'yŏngbannŭn pokkanggyŏngsusul 好評받는「腹腔鏡手術」(Laparoscopic Surgery That Is Evaluated Positively)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 22 March 1977.

[193] According to Park Seungmann, elite physicians who led the FPP and medical community considered laparoscopic tubal ligation a more advanced and even versatile technology that is applicable to diagnosis vis-à-vis mini-lap, thus the predominance of laparoscopic tubal ligation in South Korea. Park Seungmann, "Technological History of Laparoscopy,"148–56.

[194] Kim Sun-im, "Wild Chrysanthemums Blossom Late."

of the technology, it remained a surgical procedure that required potential users to overcome their fears and concerns. Prior to the implementation of the national healthcare system in the late 1980s, the high cost of hospital visits was a significant barrier to healthcare access for many Koreans. Furthermore, the majority of women in the country continued to give birth at home until the late 1970s. In 1970, only 17.6% of women in the country gave birth to their babies in hospitals and maternity clinics led by midwives. Although the rate was higher in urban areas and had increased gradually, by 1977, the rate of institutional delivery was still below 45%.[195] In this context, for many Korean women, the prospect of lying on an operating table in front of strangers while undergoing a tubal ligation was a source of anxiety. In the case of Kim, what made her accept this demand was having experienced two abortions without anesthesia.

Abortion as a Tool of Population Control

Some surveys suggest that Kim's experience with abortion was not an exceptional case. A medical article on the subject of abortion in the country between 1964 and 1984 reported that the number of women who underwent abortion gradually increased. The proportion of married women who had undergone an abortion at least once was recorded at 7% in 1964, 30% in 1973, and 53% in 1984. The rates were markedly higher in urban areas than in rural areas, yet the disparity between the two regions diminished over time.[196] This was partially attributable to an increase in women who chose abortion as a contraceptive method for various reasons, as well as the government's deliberate non-enforcement of the abortion law.

In 1963 and 1965, Hong Sung-bong, a professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Sudo Medical College, the predecessor of Korea University's medical college, led the two studies funded by the PC, which constituted the pilot programs for the FPP.[197] The former study was conducted on 3,204 women in Seongdong Gu, Seoul (urban area), and the latter on 2,084 women in Yeonki County, Chungcheong Province (rural area). The results of the surveys indicate that women in urban areas were more likely to have undergone abortions and to have experienced fewer pregnancies than women in rural areas. Given the context of abortion in the 1950s, the results are to be expected. What is more noteworthy is the manner in which those involved in the FPP interpreted

[195] Shin Jae-chul et al., "Changing Patterns of Childbirths in Korea (III)," 600.

[196] Hong Sung-bong 홍성봉, "In'gongyusanŭi pyŏnch'ŏn 인공유산의 변천 (The Change in Artificial Abortions)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science*, 31.11 (1988): 1503–13.

[197] Sudo Medical College was the predecessor of the present Medical College at Korea University.

the results and drew their conclusions. The experts and officials elected to concentrate on women in rural areas who were "absolutely requiring family planning" and to refrain from intervening in urban areas where women were using abortion as contraception, at least for a time.[198] However, as the author of the history of the PPKF wrote, such subsequent surveys served as "a valuable reference for the government's legalization of artificial abortion through the Maternal and Child Health Act."[199]

The Maternal and Child Health Act (hereafter MCHA) was enacted in 1973. It is noteworthy that the process of enacting this legislation was not without its challenges. Despite a shift in attitude surrounding abortion, birth control, and contraception, the MHSA encountered considerable resistance whenever it sought to legalize abortion. As previously discussed, in 1953, the majority of lawmakers in the inaugural assembly were opposed to the legalization of abortion, citing concerns that it would lead to a reduction in population. In the early 1970s, those who were opposed to the legalization of abortion asserted the moral issue as a rationale for their stance. An editorial on the aforementioned effort by the MHSA in 1970 illustrates the shift in attitude surrounding abortion, birth control, and contraception. Although the editor of *The Dong-A Ilbo* acknowledged the reality of abortion and the necessity of family planning, he opposed the legalization of abortion. He asserted that "abortion is highly harmful to the maternal health" and that it constitutes "murder that kills new life." Furthermore, he suggested that legalizing abortion "could open the door to abuse abortion, leading to sexual promiscuity."[200]

Notwithstanding these oppositions, as the military coup enabled the inception of FPP against opponents of the population growth reduction policy introduced a decade ago, another radical political measure facilitated the enactment of the MCHA: the October Restoration (*yusin)* and the enactment of the *Yusin* Constitution. The drastic measure virtually permitted Park Chunghee to assume the presidency for life, thereby enabling him to seize control of the assembly, replace the Constitution, and introduce the MCHA, which allows conditional abortion.

Article 8 of the MCHA delineated five circumstances in which abortion was permissible, provided that a pregnant woman *and her spouse* consented: First, if the woman or her spouse is afflicted with

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[198] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 123.

[199] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 123.

[200] "Mojabogŏnbŏbŭi munjejŏm 「母子保健法」의 問題點 (The Problem of the Mother and Child Health Act)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 23 May 1970.

a eugenic or genetic mental handicap or physical disease as defined by the Presidential Decree;[201] second, if the woman or her spouse is infected with a contagious disease specified in the Presidential Decree; third, if pregnancy results from rape or quasi-rape; fourth, if pregnancy occurs between blood relatives or matrimonial relatives not legally permitted to marry (i.e., incest); fifth, if the pregnancy might damage the woman's health for medical reasons.[202] It is important to note that the legislation technically did not permit abortion for economic or social reasons. Nevertheless, as feminist scholar Ji Seung-gyeong observed, the government invoked the law to justify their policies that encouraged abortion for non-medical, eugenic reasons.[203]

In addition to Article 8, the legislation included significant provisions that would shape women's access to contraceptive technologies and, consequently, their relevant technological decisions. Article 10 of the legislation stipulated that the government would provide financial assistance for the FPP, including FP field workers, sterilization procedures, and organizations designated by the MHSA.[204] Consequently, this article legitimized the allocation of the national budget for the program. Indeed, despite a slight increase in international aid, the annual budget of PPFK, a semi-governmental body for the FPP, increased significantly from 1977 onwards.[205]

It is a challenging task to ascertain the precise impact of the 1973 legislation on women's decisions to terminate pregnancies. As previously discussed, the practice of abortion had already been prevalent among women, particularly in urban areas, prior to the enactment of the law. However, it is evident that the legislation enabled the government to legally endorse or facilitate abortion as a form of

[201] The first paragraph of the Article 8 established a legal foundation for the compulsory sterilization of individuals with disabilities, leading to a considerable number of sterilizations being performed on this population in facilities since the 1970s. So Hyunsoog 소현숙, "Usaenghagŭi chaerimgwa 'chŏngsang/pijŏngsang'ŭi p'ongnyŏk—kajokkyehoeksaŏpkwa changaein kangjeburimsusul 우생학의 재림과 '정상/비정상'의 폭력: 가족계획사업과 장애인 강제불임수술 (Renaissance of Eugenics and Violence Called 'Normal/Unusual': Family Planning and Forced Sterilization of Disabled People in Korea)," *Yŏksabip'yŏng* 132, (2020): 259–94.

[202] Mother and Child Health Act. Enacted 8 January 1973, Enforced from 10 May 1973.

[203] Ji SeungGyeong 지승경, "Taehan'gajokkyehoek'yŏp'oeŭi ch'ogi imshinjungjŏllosŏŭi wŏlgyŏngjojŏlsul chegonge taehan yŏn'gu (1974-1990) 대한가족계획협회의 초기 임신중절로서의 월경조절술 제공에 대한 연구 (1974–1990) (The Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea's Provision of Menstrual Regulation from 1974 to 1990)," *Yŏsŏnghangnonjip* 36.1 (2019): 121–58.

[204] Maternal and Child Health Act. Enacted 8 January 1973, enforced from 10 May 1973, Korean Law Information Center https://www.law.go.kr/LSW/lsInfoP.do?lsiSeq=899&ancYd=19730208&ancNo=02514&efYd=19730510&nwJoYnInfo=N&efGubun=Y&chrClsCd=010202&ancYnChk=0#0000 [accessed, 6 November 2022].

[205] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 372.

contraception. In a proud tone, the author of the history of the PPKF asserted that the MCHA legislation allowed them "to encourage women who had unwanted pregnancies to obtain legitimate abortions."[206] As one of such legitimate abortion methods, the procedure known as Menstrual Regulation (hereafter MR) was tested in South Korea under the auspices of the FPP. MR is defined as the induction of uterine bleeding within 14 days of the missed menstrual period with the use of a mechanical device such as a mini-vacuum aspirator and medication. As some Korean physicians had explicitly stated in newspaper articles, MR is a de facto early abortion.[207]

As with other contraceptive technologies developed during the Cold War era, the method attracted greater attention in the early 1970s, with physicians from more than fifty countries in attendance at the inaugural MR conference in Hawaii. At the December 1973 conference, 3,500 cases were presented and discussed in order to assess the method.[208] Among the conference attendees were several Korean physicians who were employed at SNU and the National Medical Center. They subsequently introduced the MR in South Korea. As the PPFK initiated a pilot program to explore the potential of MR as a contraceptive method, approximately a thousand women, who visited thirteen clinics affiliated with the PPFK from May 1974 to January 1975, underwent the MR procedure.[209] The procedures were conducted with the MR Kit, which was partially supplied by USAID in 1974.[210]

At that time, newspapers were actively promoting MR as an accessible, inexpensive, and dependable method of contraception. In March 1974, *The Dong-A Ilbo* introduced "a new contraceptive method, MR, drawing attention." The article quoted Park Chan-moo, a physician in the OB/GYN Department at the National Medical Center, who provided further details about the method. In the article titled "Abortion by Pulling out Fertilized Eggs from a Womb," Park described the procedure involving a "syringe-shaped" device as an "easy and inexpensive method with few side effects" that takes an "average of five minutes."[211] In the same month, *The Chosun Ilbo* also introduced the MR in an article titled "The Easy and Safe Contraception." In the article, Kang Sin-myung, the

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[206] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 160.

[207] "Chagung sok sujŏngnan ppoba imsin chungjŏl: sae p'iim sudanŭro kakkwang pannŭn wŏlgyŏngjojŏlbŏp 子宮속 受精卵 뽑아 임신中絕 새 피임手段으로 脚光받는 月經調節法 (Abortion by Pulling out Fertilized Eggs from a Womb: A Menstrual Regulation Method That Is Spotlighted as a New Contraceptive)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 14 March 1974.

[208] Jane E Hodgson, "A Reassessment of Menstrual Regulation," *Studies in Family Planning* 8.10 (1977):263–7, 263.

[209] PPFK, *Wŏlgyŏngjojŏlbŏbe kwanhan yŏn'gu* 월경조절법에 관한 연구 月經調節法에 關한 研究 (Study on the Diffusion of Menstrual Regulation at the Family Planning Clinic) (PPFK, 1975), 7.

[210] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 256.

[211] "Abortion by Pulling out Fertilized Eggs from a Womb," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 14 March 1974.

assistant director of Ewha Womans University Hospital, elucidated that the menstrual regulation method is a form of "inducing or controlling" menstruation that has been delayed for one or two weeks.[212] It is noteworthy that Kang did not disclose the fact that MR is an abortion procedure. There was a hesitancy to openly refer to MR as an abortion procedure, whereas, in medical journals, the method was explicitly identified as such, along with dilation and curettage (D&C).[213]

Despite the varying attitudes of physicians, the public recognized MR as an affordable, safe, and straightforward method of abortion. In 1975, the magazine *Sunday Seoul* introduced MR as an "easy and simple artificial abortion method," alongside mini-lap surgery and laparoscopic tubal ligation, which will be examined in greater detail in the subsequent section.[214] In 1976, *The Dong-A Ilbo* recommended "the MR kit, specifically, the menstrual regulation method," as a means of artificial abortion. According to the anonymous author, if the procedure were to be carried out within two weeks of a missed period, it would reduce the physical burden of abortion, for a modest fee of 5,300 won.[215]

It is difficult to ascertain the number of women who underwent a MR procedure alone; however, several sources indicate that a significant number of women had both an MR and tubal ligation. FP field workers would disseminate the message through community centers that "people seeking contraception or abortion, come to the community center. (...) If you come, we will transport you to the hospital [which performs the procedure] and back home for free."[216] On occasion, FP workers used

[212] Kang Sin-myung 강신명, "Hŭbinyuballo wŏlgyŏngjojŏri kanŭng: kanp'yŏnhago anjŏnhan p'iimŭl 吸引誘發로 月經조절이 可能 간편하고 安全한 避妊을 (Menstrual Regulation That Is Possible Through Aspiration: Simple and Safe Contraception)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 28 March 1974.

[213] To name a few, Park Yong-bae 박용배 et al., "Nan'gwanburimsurhu changgihappyŏngjŭnge kwanhan imsangjŏk koch'al 난관불임술후 장기합병증에 관한 임상적 고찰 (A Clinical Study on The Long-Term Complication of Tubal Sterilization)," Obstetrics & Gynecology Science 26.12 (1983): 1621–32; Park Chan-moo 박찬무 and Wang Young-whan 황영환, "Urinara yŏsŏng purimsure kwanhan koch'al 우리나라 여성 불임술에 관한 고찰 (Preliminary Review of Laparoscopic Female Sterilization in Korea [*sic*])," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 23.7 (1980): 591–97.

[214] "Anjŏnhago kanp'yŏnhan sae p'iimbŏp 안전하고 간편한 새 피임법 (A New Safe and Simple Contraceptive Method)," *Sunday Seoul*, 4 May 1975, 66–67.

[215] "Imsinjungjŏl chuŭihaeya hal chŏmi mant'a 姙娠中絶 注意해야할 점이 많다 (Several Things about Abortion That You Need to be Aware of)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 25 May 1976.

[216] *Kusulssaryosŏnjip2. chinjŏnghan nongminŭi hyŏptongjohabŭl wihayŏ; kajokkyehoege hŏnsinhada 구술사료선집 2. 진정한 농민의 협동조합을 위하여; 가족계획에 헌신하다 (Oral Historical Material Collection2. For Genuine Farmers' Cooperative; A Devotion to Family Planning)*, ed. by Kim Young-mi 김영미 et al. (National Institute of Korean History, 2005), 280.

"abortion" as an incentive for sterilization. For instance, one FP worker recalled that she and her colleague provided MR procedures to women who opted for sterilization due to the limited budget for the MR, which was insufficient to accommodate all women who desired abortions.

> *We have a one-year goal of 38 tubal [surgeries], and we only have a quota of 11 menstrual regulation procedures. So we only give it to (pregnant) people who want to have tubal surgery. Why would we give it to just anyone? It was not enough. And the government subsidizes 28,000 won per menstrual regulation. So we can't give it to everyone.*[217]

The recollection of the former FP worker is consistent with the experiences of women in similar circumstances. Song Yŏng-ja underwent an abortion and tubal ligation in the early 1980s during her thirties, while residing in Seoul with her husband, son, and daughter. "Almost every three days," she recalled, "a van from a health center" would travel announcing, "Let's give birth to two children and raise them well." Upon learning of her pregnancy, she considered terminating the pregnancy because she thought that "three children were too many to educate." Her husband expressed support for this decision, leading her to seek assistance from FP workers in the van in her area. She was transported to a designated hospital by the van, where she underwent an abortion and subsequent laparoscopic tubal ligation for "free."[218]

A substantial body of medical literature on female sterilization was published in the 1970s and 1980s. Some of these articles addressed the concomitant performance of sterilization procedures with abortions, including D&C and MR. A study of 250 cases of laparoscopic tubal ligation conducted between 1976 and 1977 revealed that in 34% of all cases, abortions and sterilizations were performed simultaneously.[219] In an article on 222 tubal ligation cases conducted between 1976 and 1981, it was reported that 28% of all cases were for sterilization and concurrent abortions through "dilation and evacuation"(D&E) and MR.[220] In an article on laparoscopic tubal ligation, two physicians, who identified themselves as affiliated with the Korean Association for Voluntary Sterilization (KAVS),

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[217] Lee Mi-kyung, "A Feminist Analysis of the State Policy on Birth Control," 62.

[218] Song Yŏng-ja, interview.

[219] Shin Myon-woo 신면우 and Kim Syng-wook 김승욱, "Pokkanggyŏng nan'gwanburimsusure taehan imsangjŏk yŏn'gu 복강경 난관불임수술에 대한 임상적 연구 (A Clinical Study on the Laparoscopic Tubal Sterilization)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 20.12 (1977): 927–40.

[220] In this study, tubal ligation included abdominal and laparoscopic tubal ligation. Park Yong-bae 박용배 et al., "Nan'gwanburimsurhu changgihappyŏngjŭnge kwanhan imsangjŏk koch'al 난관불임술후 장기합병증에 관한 임상적 고찰 (A Clinical Study on The Long-Term Complication of Tubal Sterilization)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 26.12 (1983): 1621–32.

presented a national overview of the situation. The authors analyzed the results of a survey of 310 physicians, who worked for family planning-designated hospitals and clinics in 1979. 57% of the respondents answered that among all their laparoscopic tubal ligation procedures, over 30% of the procedures were conducted with MR.[221] A further survey of 900 physicians conducted by the same association in 1987 demonstrates that the aforementioned tendency had not changed significantly by the late 1980s. The survey results indicate that over 70% of respondents in designated hospitals and clinics reported performing both tubal ligation and "artificial abortion."[222] The consistently high rate of induced abortions per total pregnancy throughout the 1980s, which remained above 30% was a partial result of such concurrent procedures, which was aided by the government under the name of the FPP.[223]

Embracing Hospitals in Medicalization of Childbirth

In the 1980s, a greater proportion of Korean women became accustomed to visiting hospitals for the purposes of contraception and childbirth. In her study of childbirth and prenatal checkups in South Korea, Cho Young-Mi argues that in the 1980s, the rate of deliveries in medical facilities increased significantly, and throughout the 1980s–2000s, institutional delivery became the norm, while prenatal checkups were regularized. Childbirth was medicalized. According to her, as American middle-class women did in the first half of the twentieth century, more Korean women embraced medical technologies related to childbirth that would save them and their babies from abnormal deliveries, and hospitals in which experts used technology to aid in labor and delivery.

The statistical data pertaining to childbirth in medical facilities and prenatal checkups provide corroboration for her argument. In 1970, only 18% of women underwent childbirth in a medical facility, including hospitals, health centers, and midwifery clinics (*chosanwon*). However, the rate increased gradually, with a particularly notable shift in urban areas. The proportion of women who gave birth in a medical facility nationwide increased from 32% in 1973, 40% in 1977, 53% in 1979, to 77% in 1985.

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[221] Park Chan-moo 박찬무 and Wang Young-whan 황영환, "Urinara yŏsŏng purimsure kwanhan koch'al 우리나라 여성 불임술에 관한 고찰 (Preliminary Review of Laparoscopic Female Sterilization in Korea)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 23.7 (1980), 595.

[222] In this survey of 1987, the authors did not specify the types of abortion methods. Bae Byung-ju 배병주, *Taehanburimsisulgwallihyŏphoe 20nyŏnsa 大韓不姙施術管理協會 二十年史, 1975–1994 (The History of Korean Association for Voluntary Sterilization)* (Korean Association for Voluntary Sterilization, 1998), 80.

[223] Cho Nam-hoon and Ahn Namkee, "Changes in the Determinants of Induced Abortion in Korea," *Pogŏnsahoeyŏn'gu* 13.2 (1993): 67–80.

Concurrently, the percentage of mothers who sought prenatal checkups at hospitals increased markedly, reaching 69% in 1980, 82% in 1985, 94% in 1991, and nearly 100% in 1994.[224] Based on such statistics, Cho argues that Korean women adopted childbirth in hospitals, and that the change led women to obtain prenatal care regularly.[225]

The aforementioned shifts were, however, nearly reciprocal rather than sequential, and the changes that affected how women chose and used contraceptive technologies were intertwined. An Mi-suk's experience exemplifies these shifts in women's patterns of pregnancy and childbirth during the early 1980s. An was born in 1961 in a rural area and completed her education. She subsequently held various positions, including nanny, housemaid, and dressmaking apprentice in several cities. In the early 1980s, in her early twenties, she returned to the province of her birth, met her husband, who worked as a mechanic for a small taxi company, married him, and became a housewife.

In 1983, when she became pregnant, she consulted with a physician at a hospital who informed her that her pelvis was inappropriate for vaginal delivery. In accordance with the physician's recommendation, she proceeded with a cesarean section (C-section) to give birth to her first child, a daughter. During her prenatal examinations for her second pregnancy, her physician recommended a C-section, which was a common recommendation in the 1980s for women who had previously undergone a C-section. She was disinclined to heed this counsel due to her "shameful" experience with her first surgery, the previous C-section with general anesthetic. She described the experience as akin to "tying up her arms," hearing "nurses' chatter" on her body, and "being treated inhumanely." The traumatic experience led her to opt for a vaginal delivery (*chayŏnbunman*). She thought, "It will come out somehow." However, the situation did not unfold as she had anticipated. Her water broke on the eve of the Lunar New Year, one of the two most significant holidays in South Korea. She was so distressed that she sought medical attention at a hospital and opted for a C-section once more. However, due to the holiday, the hospital's anesthesiologist was not available, resulting in her transfer to a different hospital.

In the hospital, she gave birth to her second child, the first son. Upon the attending physician's confirmation that the infant was male, the surgeon emerged from the operating room to meet with her husband. The physician conveyed the news and recommended that a tubal ligation be performed while her abdomen was open. A third cesarean surgery would be risky, he added. Although the couple

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[224] Shin Jae-chul et al., "Changing Patterns of Childbirths in Korea (III)," 600.

[225] Cho Young-Mi 조영미, "Han'gugŭi ch'ulssanŭi ŭiryohwa kwajŏng 한국의 출산의 의료화 과정(1960–2000) (The medicalization of Childbirth in Korea (1960–2000))," *Yŏsŏnggŏn'gang* 7.1 (2006): 29–52.

did not decide on tubal ligation exactly in advance, they had already agreed that, if the second child was a son, they would have no more children. Therefore, he consented to her tubal ligation.[226] This was her first and last use of contraceptive technology.

It is notable that a significant proportion of young women became familiar with the concept of prenatal care in the late 1970s. An article in *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* in 1978 reported that young women began to visit maternity hospitals soon after getting married, while their mothers and grandmothers held the view that "new brides don't need to go to doctors" and "all babies are born if the pregnancy goes to full term."[227]

By around the mid-1980s, regardless of their socioeconomic status, an increasing number of women, like An, sought prenatal care at hospitals, gave birth via C-section, and occasionally underwent a tubal ligation during the operation. In 1984, the *Maeil Business Newspaper published a* report indicating a recent increase in the number of C-sections performed. "Among the 68,000 deliveries covered by health insurance between 1980 and 1983, 20% were conducted via Caesarean surgery." Additionally, the newspaper article reported that the popularity of the surgery reached a point where some young women were organizing *kye* to cover the costs associated with the procedure. The anonymous author conveyed that recommendations for C-sections by physicians have contributed to the increase in C-section deliveries for reasons including maternal or infant health, inappropriate fetal positions, and previous C-sections, as illustrated by An's case. Furthermore, concerns about potential complications during vaginal delivery and related disputes among medical professionals drove the recommendation for surgical intervention. Concurrently, the author indicated that some women who would not have been adversely affected by a normal delivery (*chŏngsangbunman*) nevertheless elected to undergo the surgery for various reasons: "excessive fear" of pain; a rumor that babies born through Caesarean surgery are smarter; maintaining their figure (this was somewhat rare) and giving birth at an auspicious hour based on Chinese astrology (*saju*). In particular, the author criticized women who chose C-sections to avoid pain, citing the opinion of Mi Sun-bŏm, a professor in the OB/GYN Department at SNU hospital.

> *A considerable number of young pregnant women ask for Caesarean surgery even before they experience contractions. It reflects young women's attitude toward childbirth where they try to*

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[226] An Mi-Suk, interview.

[227] "Ch'ŏt imsin kinjang·puran'gam Ilgi swiwŏ 첫 姙娠 긴장·不安感 일기쉬워… (The First Pregnancy Which Would Cause Tension and Anxiety)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 20 December 1978.

handle their lives without much effort. I've heard of women who organize kye and collect money among friends for the surgery.[228]

An article published in 1984 in the magazine *Women Donga* presented a comparable, albeit more comprehensive account. Hong Tae-suk, a journalist at the *Doctors' Times* (*uisasinmun*), documented changes surrounding C-sections. She stated that while pregnant women had previously rejected the medical recommendations of physicians regarding C-sections, they have become more willing to accept such medical advice. She asserted that the frequency of this medical advice increased partly due to the concern of physicians about litigation since the implementation of the National Health Insurance scheme (NHI). As a result of the insurance coverage provided, the cost of a C-section and related care was reduced to 300,000 won, which represents half of what it would have cost without insurance. Similarly, as previously noted, she reported the opinions of some physicians who believed that women who desire to time their babies' births based on Chinese astrology and that "recent young people" without endurance were more likely to undergo C-sections due to concerns about labor pains and, on rare occasions, to avoid potential damage to the vagina, which could impact future sexual pleasure.[229] Consequently, both physicians and journalists have attributed the observed increase in C-sections to non-medical causes.

Additionally, the increase in the number of Cesarean sections can be attributed, at least in part, to a transition in the Korean private-centered medical system. As Park Jong-heon observes, the introduction of the NHI had a significant impact on both patients and physicians, particularly OB/GYNs. As the scheduled medical fee for delivery was considerably lower than physicians had anticipated, private clinics and hospitals concentrated on treatments that patients were required to pay for themselves. One such treatment was the C-section with concurrent hospitalization.[230] Consequently, the increase in C-sections was a result of women's desires and physicians' economic motivation, which subsequently influenced women's contraceptive choices.

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[228] "Chewangjŏlgae punman manhajinda 帝王切開분만 많아진다 (Increasing Cesarean Sections)," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 22 November 1984.

[229] Hong Tae-suk 홍태숙, "Hyŏnjangch'wijae: chŏmjŏm nŭlgo innŭn chewangjŏlgaesusul 현장취재: 점점 늘고 있는 제왕절개수술 (On-the-Scene Report: Increasing Cesarean Surgeries)," *Women Donga*, March 1984, 354–61.

[230] Park Jong-Heon 박종헌, "Han'guk saengsigŭiryoŭi chŏn'gaegwajŏnge kwanhan yŏn'gu : sogŭkchŏk chŏngch'aekpojojaesŏ sanŏpkaech'ŏkcharo 한국 생식의료의 전개과정에 관한 연구 : 소극적 정책보조자에서 산업개척자로 (A Study on the Development of Reproductive Medicine in Korea: From Passive Policy Assistant to Industrial Pioneer)" (doctoral thesis, Seoul National University, 2008), 105–14.

It is challenging to ascertain the number of women who opted for a C-section and simultaneous tubal ligation, as the experts who spearheaded the compilation of comprehensive data on childbirth, including the location of the delivery, prenatal care, and abortion, did not perceive the correlation between C-section and tubal ligation as a significant issue. However, in addition to An's case and her observation of the common practice of tubal ligation during C-section at that time, women's experiences lend support to the conclusion that as more opted for C-sections, they chose tubal ligation during the operation, provided that they and their husbands agreed in advance that they would have no more children.

For instance, Kim Kang-ja, who gave birth to her son in 1990 and her daughter in 1992, underwent a tubal ligation procedure during her C-section. She had used oral contraceptive pills for spacing between the first and second child but discontinued their use shortly thereafter due to the onset of symptoms, which she recalled as being "the same symptoms as morning sickness." In accordance with the advice of her physician, she began using an imported copper IUD (Copper-T), which was slightly more costly but was known for its reduced propensity to elicit adverse effects. The copper IUD allowed her the "convenient intercourse with her husband" without experiencing the adverse effects associated with oral contraceptive pills. However, the IUD was not an ideal contraceptive method. The procedure demanded her to bear a certain degree of discomfort and psychological resistance. Given these circumstances, it is unsurprising that during her prenatal examinations for her second child, she opted for a C-section and concurrent tubal ligation, as recommended by her physician.[231] In her case, tubal ligation during C-section allowed for more convenient, safer, and permanent contraception. Her case demonstrates one of the women who were willing to accept the combination of childbirth technology and contraceptive technologies.

In the 1980s, as the number of women who gave birth in hospitals increased, postpartum tubal ligation allowed women a comparable advantage to tubal ligation during C-sections. Indeed, postpartum tubal ligation was already regarded as an efficacious contraceptive measure by the physicians involved in the FPP in the early 1970s. In 1972, a couple of years prior to the introduction of laparoscopic tubal ligation in South Korea, Kang Shin-myung, the aforementioned professor of the OB/GYN department at Ewha Womans University Hospital, introduced postpartum tubal ligation and vaginal tubal ligation. In an article published in the magazine *Happy Home*, Professor Kang recommended postpartum tubal ligation for the following reasons.

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[231] Kim Kang-ja, interview.

> *Within 24 to 48 hours following delivery, the fallopian tube can be readily ligated via an exceptionally minor abdominal incision (4 to 5 cm) with local anesthesia. In addition, tubal ligation exerts minimal physiological effects on patients' bodies, and its cost is exceedingly low.*[232]

He stated that already 14–15 women per month who visited his university hospital for delivery would undergo the "simple surgery," which costs approximately the same or double that of an abortion. Given the pervasiveness of abortion, his economic assessment of the procedure appeared to be a reasonable approach.[233] However, this option was available only for high-income women in urban areas who gave birth in hospitals. In 1972, only 24% of women in the country visited medical facilities, including hospitals, health centers, and midwifery clinics, for delivery. This rate increased to 36%, but in rural areas, the rate remained only 15%.[234]

In the 1980s, the rapid normalization of institutional childbirth (*sisŏl punman*), more precisely, in hospitals, led to an increase in the number of women considering postpartum tubal ligation as an economically viable contraceptive option. As the NHI alleviated the financial burden associated with hospital visits, the majority of women chose to give birth in hospitals, where physicians could perform postpartum tubal ligation procedures, rather than maternity clinics run by midwives, who were not permitted to provide such services.[235]

Sŏ Chŏng-sun's story demonstrates the impact of these changes on women's contraceptive choices, particularly the increase in postpartum tubal ligations. She underwent a postpartum tubal ligation shortly after being hospitalized following the delivery of her third and final child via induced delivery in 1983. Given her responsibilities as a teacher and the mother of two sons, she made the decision not to have more children. Despite her mother's frequent assertion that she would desire a daughter who would become her friend in the future, she reflected, "Who can determine whether my third child will be male or female?" Consequently, she began using contraceptive measures. Her condom use experience was "bad" and her husband never liked the idea of "any contact with a knife on his body," by which she meant surgery (including a vasectomy). Therefore, she opted for the rhythm method, which demanded only minimal cooperation from her husband—specifically, abstinence during specific periods of her menstrual cycle—and her understanding of ovulation cycles,

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[232] Kang Shin-myung, "Nan'gwan'gyŏlch'alssulgwa kŭ ijŏm 난관결찰술과 그 이점 (Tubal Ligation Surgery and its Benefits)," *Happy Home*, 15.

[233] Kang Shin-myung, "Tubal Ligation Surgery and its Benefits."

[234] Shin Jae-chul, et al., "Changing Patterns of Childbirths in Korea (III)," 600.

[235] Cho Young-Mi, "The medicalization of Childbirth in Korea," 43.

which she had acquired during her academic days. Despite her best efforts, the rhythm method proved ineffective, resulting in her unintended pregnancy and a subsequent hospital visit. At the hospital, an ultrasound examination was conducted, during which the doctor alluded that the fetus was female. Therefore, she joyfully elected to give birth to the fetus. She gave birth to her daughter via induced labor and subsequently underwent "tubal surgery." Like her husband, she was apprehensive about surgery. However, the pain she endured during and after her induced labor convinced her to undergo postpartum tubal ligation: "It was over quickly, and I didn't know what happened. I would be afraid to get [tubal ligation] done alone."[236]

Another technological change that has impacted Sŏ Chŏng-sun's experience is the introduction of ultrasound scans. These are not contraceptive technology in and of themselves, but are nevertheless intertwined with contraceptive technology. As Cho Hee-soo illustrates, some OB/GYN clinics began to introduce ultrasound systems to attract patients in a more competitive environment with the onset of the NHI. In the mid-1980s, the advent of more affordable ultrasonography systems enabled smaller hospitals and clinics to equip themselves with the technology, thereby integrating ultrasound scans into the standard prenatal care regimen.[237] Despite the fact that the most common prenatal checkups, including ultrasonography, remained uncovered by the NHI even after 2000, by 1985, the majority of pregnant women had come to expect and use prenatal checkups as a matter of course.[238]

This situation prompted some pregnant women who had previously embraced hospitals as places for themselves and their babies to begin focusing on ultrasound technology as a means of determining the sex of the fetus. While Sŏ Chŏng-sun, who had previously given birth to two sons, expressed a desire for a daughter, women who underwent the new monitoring technology generally exhibited a preference for sons. A preference for boys was widely observed in other Asian countries, particularly in China and India, which has occasionally resulted in an unnatural sex ratio in those countries.

[236] Sŏ Jŏng-sun, interview.

[237] Cho Hee-soo 조희수, "Hyŏndae han'guk san'gwahagesŏ sanjŏn ch'oŭmp'a chindanŭi pogŭpkwa imsin kyŏnghŏmŭi pyŏnhwa 현대 한국 산과학에서 산전 초음파 진단의 보급과 임신 경험의 변화 (Institutionalizing Ultrasonography, Transforming Pregnancy: Dissemination of Prenatal Ultrasonography in Korean Obstetrics, 1960s–1990s)" (master's thesis, Seoul National University, 2021), 39–42.

[238] "Imsanbu sanjŏnjinch'al pohŏm kŭbyŏ cheoe 임산부 產前진찰 保險급여 제외 (Prenatal Care Is Not Covered by National Health Insurance)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 19 April 1993; "'Min'ganŭibo' ch'ujine simindanch'edŭl panbal '민간의보' 추진에 시민단체들 반발 (NGOs' Backlash against a Plan for Private Medical Insurance)," *Yonhapnews*, 21 May 2000.

However, the underlying causes differed.[239] In South Korea, the preference for sons has its roots in Confucian ideology, which has long held sway in the country. Since the Chosŏn Dynasty, women have been expected to bear sons who would perpetuate the family name in accordance with the Confucian tenet of patrilineal influence. As Bae Eun-kyong notes, following the liberation in 1945, the expectations placed upon women in South Korea expanded beyond the expectation placed on women in the ruling class, influencing the expectations of ordinary women, and in turn, determining the "social status of women" in Korean society. Consequently, a significant proportion of women continued to have children until they had at least one son.[240] The FPP's 1970s slogan, "Regardless of whether they are sons or daughters, let's have only two children and raise them well," reflected this preference for sons. It also demonstrates that the government recognized the preference as a significant obstacle which would impede efforts to reduce population growth.[241]

Im Eun-sup's essay in 1976 *Happy Home* illustrates a way in which the preference for sons shaped women's contraceptive decisions. Furthermore, it foretold the prospective ramifications of employing technology to determine the sex of the fetus. In her essay, "What's the Matter with Having Two Daughters?" which was awarded a prize in the contest to promote the FPP, the author, a mother of two daughters, detailed her efforts for contraception. Upon the birth of her second daughter in 1972, she elected to use oral contraceptive pills that allowed her to engage in contraception without her husband's knowledge. He had insisted on "two [children], with at least one being a son." Despite her awareness of the potential adverse effects associated with the pill, she decided to embrace the risks associated with the technology. Indeed, she experienced nausea and dizziness from using the pill, which led to feelings of anxiety. She endured these discomforts for "twenty days" until they "disappeared."

Following a period of several months, she disclosed her use of the pill to her husband and directly confronted his opposition. Her husband articulated a desire for a son, whom he and his wife could rely on in the future and who would satisfy his parents in the present. Despite her parents' experience of trying for sons but only having several daughters, and emphasizing "the necessity of family planning in this society," and "the happiness of families who have practiced family planning," she was unable to persuade him that night. However, her persistent efforts eventually led to her husband's

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[239] Monica Das Gupta et al., "Why Is Son Preference So Persistent in East and South Asia? A Cross-Country Study of China, India and the Republic of Korea," *The Journal of Development Studies* 40.2 (2003): 153–87.

[240] Bae Eun-kyung, *Human Reproduction in Modern Korea*, 35, 144,

[241] PPFK, *The History of PPFK for Thirty Years*, 26.

cooperation, thereby allowing her to feel free to use the oral contraceptive pills and further, to contemplate the possibility of utilizing the loop or tubal ligation. Following a discussion with her husband, he "unexpectedly" volunteered to undergo a vasectomy. This development prompted her to experience feelings of "doubt" and subsequently "guilt" toward him. Her husband initially concealed his vasectomy from his parents but later disclosed it, justifying the decision as being based on medical advice provided by her physician. His father accepted this explanation, but his mother, who had been praying in temples for a grandson, was disheartened.[242]

While Im Eun-sup remained steadfast in her decision to have only two children regardless of their sex and successfully influenced her husband, other women who placed a high value on sons began exploring the potential of utilizing technology to screen fetuses. In 1976, *The Dong-A Ilbo* reported that prenatal screening techniques, such as amniocentesis, which were developed with the intention of "preventing" "eugenic deformities," were being "abused by mothers who had only daughters and did not want more." The author described the women as being obsessed with sons while overlooking that the mothers' desires came from sociocultural contexts, including family dynamics. The article, however, accurately captured the circumstances in which some mothers discovered a new technology for determining the sex of the fetus, and subsequently combined it with abortion in ways that the developers of amniocentesis and the bureaucrats who supported abortion had not anticipated. Nevertheless, at that time, few hospitals were equipped to offer amniocentesis, and the accuracy of the screening test was approximately 10%. Consequently, only a limited number of affluent or desperate women resorted to amniocentesis and abortion in this manner.[243]

In the 1980s, the preference for boys was expressed as "two children, including at least one boy," and despite government efforts, this preference persisted rather than abated. The aforementioned experience of An Mi-suk reflected the prevailing circumstances. Upon confirmation of the infant's sex and recommendation for tubal ligation, the husband, who had previously discussed the desired number of children and sons with his wife, accepted the suggestion without any indication of reluctance. The couple, like their physician, assumed that the presence of two children, including a son, constituted a sufficient rationale for opting for permanent contraception or sterilization for granted. When I inquired as to whether the couple would have had only two children, "if the baby had

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[242] Im Ŭn-sŏp 임은섭, "Ttalman turimyŏn ŏttaeyo 딸만 둘이면 어때요 (1)(2) (What's the Problem with Only Having Two Daughters? (1)(2))," *Happy Home*, May 1976, 34–37; June 1976, 24–26.

[243] "「T'aeasŏnggambyŏl」i oyongdoego itta 「胎兒性鑑別」이 誤用되고 있다 ('Determining the Sex of a Fetus' Is Being Abused)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 28 December 1976.

been their second daughter," she responded in the negative. She then described the chilly responses she received from her mother-in-law upon the birth of her daughter.[244]

In light of these developments, it is unsurprising that an increasing number of women opted for ultrasound scans as a technology that allowed them to determine fetal sex with greater precision and immediacy than amniocentesis. A national survey on fertility and family health revealed that in 1984, 26% of mothers who gave birth in that year had undergone prenatal ultrasonography, with 6% of them using it to determine fetal sex.[245] The government regarded the situation as a matter of concern, not on the basis of the health risks associated with abortion or the value of life, but rather in relation to population. In a 1984 cartoon featured in *Happy Home,* the government's concern regarding the potential for an imbalance in the population's sex ratio as a result of sex identification was highlighted. The narrative introduces a matchmaker (Madame *ttu)*, who was notorious for charging an exorbitant fee in violation of the law, and a housewife. The matchmaker expressed confidence in the future demand for her services, anticipating an increase in male clients. The continuation of determining and terminating female fetuses would eventually result in a scarcity of women, which would in turn lead to an increase in the number of men resorting to the services of matchmakers. The housewife, who was concerned that women's desires for sons would cause a severe lack of brides in a decade, represented the government's perspective rather than that of women themselves.[246] In 1986, to address the issue, the government passed a measure that stipulated that physicians who identified the sex of a fetus would have their licenses revoked.[247]

Diversity of Contraceptive Technology since the Late 1970s

The advent of the NHI, which facilitated greater accessibility to hospital care for Koreans, the medicalization of childbirth, and the emergence of a new concept of the ideal family contributed to the growing utilization of surgical contraceptive technologies among women. However, it should be noted that the adoption of medical contraceptives did not result in the displacement of other

[244] An Mi-suk and her husband, interviewed by the author, 2022.

[245] The Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs (KIHASA) has conducted the National Survey on Fertility and Family Health (and Welfare) every three years since 1970. Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs 한국보건사회연구원, *Chŏn'guk ch'ulssallyŏk mit kajokpogŏn·pokchi silt'ae chosa 전국 출산력 및 가족보건실태 조사 (A Survey on the National Fertility and Family Health)* (Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs, 1988), 167.

[246] Kim Park 김박, "Ttaengttaengi ilga 땡땡이 일가 (The Ttaengttangi's Family)," *Happy Home*, June 1984, 65.

[247] "Sŏnggambyŏl haengwi ŭisa myŏnhŏman ch'wisok'iro 性감별행위 醫師 면허만 취소키로 (The Punishment for Determining Sex Will Be Only License Revocation)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 23 September 1986.

contraceptive technologies. While women selected a contraceptive method that allowed them to prevent pregnancy within the shifting sociocultural context surrounding them, in the 1970s women chose a contraceptive technology among several co-existing alternatives and used them in more subtle ways.

As Kim Kang-ja did, women employed not only oral contraceptives and IUDs but also rhythm methods, spermicides, and condoms. This allowed temporary contraception and thus control of their fertility depending on their situation, such as childcare responsibilities as well as future education expenses. In 1977 *Happy Home*, Kim Ok-sun described her meticulous use of the oral contraceptive pill in her comprehensive plan:

> *I got married on September 2, 1974. After we got married, my husband and I decided to work until our financial situation became stable. I planned to get pregnant in June-August and deliver the baby in March-May, which would be good for my morning sickness and timing of delivery. It would be helpful for weaning, childcare, and having a smart baby. (….) My husband, who thought that oral contraceptive pills would be unhealthy for some reason, tried to discourage me from them. However, having persuaded him, I took the pills for nine months. (…) Because I had irregular menstrual periods, pills were very helpful in precisely regulating the timing and duration of my menstrual periods.*[248]

She stated that she used oral contraceptive pills for her intricate family plan, despite the potential for adverse effects because the pill allowed her to anticipate her pregnancy by regulating her menstrual cycle in alignment with her work plan and to further determine the season that offers superior "childcare" for "a smart boy."

In her 1976 essay in *Happy Home*, Ch'oe Hwa-ja illustrates how women selected and used various contraceptive methods to fit their specific needs. She and her husband agreed to practice contraception for a period of one or two years due to their economic circumstances. She employed the rhythm method. However, after only one year, she became so desperate for a child that she ceased using the method. She attempted various methods known to increase the likelihood of having a son, including dietary changes and douching, following instructions in a book, in the hope of having a "healthy and cute son."

Following the birth of her first son in May 1970, she began using contraceptive methods with the objective of spacing the birth of her second child by a period of three years. To that end, she opted

[248] "Mŏngnŭn p'iimyak iraesŏ chot'a: pogyongjadŭrŭi kyŏnghŏmdam 먹는 피임약 이래서 좋다: 복용자들의 경험담 (Advantages of the Oral Contraceptive Pill: Users' Experience)," *Happy Home*, January 1977, 22.

for the rhythm method, but was unsuccessful due to her husband's lack of cooperation. Consequently, she chose the loop as an alternative method that did not demand her partner's cooperation. Unfortunately, due to an infection, the use of the loop was limited to a period of five months. Her husband remained reluctant to cooperate, expressing displeasure stating, "You've already decided to have two children. Why not have another one as soon as possible and stop there? Why are you so set on spacing out three years between the first and second child?" Despite her husband's complaint, she remained steadfast in her decision. For her, spacing was of significant importance, as caring for two infants only two years apart, all by herself, would undoubtedly present a considerable challenge. Ultimately, she was able to persuade her husband to "use condoms during the days around ovulation day" for a period of time.

Afterward, she commenced oral contraceptive medication. However, her decision to use oral contraceptives was not a result of her husband's change of mind regarding condom use. Rather, she used the hormonal pill to regulate her menstrual cycles, with the objective of aligning the birthday of her second child with that of her first. To this end, calculating the precise date of her ovulation was demanded to match the birth of her second son. Ch'oe was not unduly troubled by this, having practiced the rhythm method for an extended period. As she had planned, she gave birth to her second son exactly three years after she delivered her first. Some have commented that it is coincidental that her second son was born on the same day as her first. However, she wrote as follows: "It was an achievement that I made through sheer will and effort." The following year, her husband underwent a vasectomy, and her efforts at contraception came to an end.[249]

It is noteworthy that Ch'oe's husband accepted a vasectomy, which reflected a shift in attitude toward the male surgical contraceptive method. Since the late 1960s, there has been a notable increase in the rate of women whose male partners have undergone vasectomy. The national fertility survey on women aged 15–49 indicates that, with the exception of the period between 1979 and 1982, the percentage of IUDs and tubal ligations—female contraceptive methods—was significantly higher than that of other methods. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the proportion of women who responded that their male partners used vasectomy gradually increased from 1966 to 1991.[250]

What factors were responsible for these observed changes? It is challenging to attribute these changes to technological advances. In contrast to the significant developments observed in the female

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[249] Ch'oe Hwa-ja 최화자, "Saengmyŏngŭl tahae naŭi punsinŭl 생명을 다해 나의 분신을 (My All Life for My Legacies)," *Happy Home*, October 1976, 34–7.

[250] Department of Economic and Social Affairs in Population Division at United Nations, World Contraceptive Use.

contraceptive methods influenced by the global population control movement, the vasectomy procedure has remained largely unchanged. The history of the vasectomy can be traced back to the late nineteenth century in the United States, where lawmakers concluded that the technology was suitable for "individuals considered unfit." As a result of the legal framework that permits the coercive sterilization of "the unfit" in more than twenty states, the male sterilization procedure had previously been well developed and tested.[251]

In the 1960s in South Korea, the procedure came to the attention of Korean experts associated with the FPP. They regarded vasectomy as a straightforward, effective, and, more crucially, economical contraceptive method for curbing population growth, which was one of the measures for the country's economic development plan. In many ways, the vasectomy was similar to the Lippes Loop. The male sterilization procedure did not demand any sophisticated devices and was straightforward enough to be performed in accordance with South Korean medical standards in the early 1960s to the extent that the procedures were sometimes conducted in mobile clinics. In addition, it was a more efficient contraceptive technology vis-à-vis what experts referred to as "traditional" contraceptive methods, such as condoms and spermicides. This was why the FPP advocated for vasectomy from its inception in 1962.

However, the number of individuals who underwent vasectomies did not reach the expectations of the medical experts and bureaucrats. A reader's contribution published in *The Dong-A Ilbo* in 1964 provides an illustrative example of the sociocultural context in South Korea that the experts had not fully considered. The reader, Song Ki-sang, a 33-year-old teacher, and his wife had five children and elected to undergo a vasectomy, deeming it the "safest and best" contraceptive method. When the couple's decision was inadvertently disclosed to Song's parents by his young son, his grandparents expressed their disapproval, crying, "Only humble men [*sangnom*] get surgery!" They also argued that "all children are always provided for." This aversion to surgery, along with the opposition to birth control among Koreans, particularly elders, limited the use of vasectomy.

A further deterrent to the vasectomy was the potential for adverse effects. People were apprehensive that the procedure would result in not only back pain and loss of strength but also sexual dysfunction, including impotence and decline in sexual power (*chŏngnyŏk*, 精力). These concerns were based on rumors, but they were also influenced by the experiences of relatives, neighbors, or friends who had undergone a vasectomy.[252] Physicians attributed these side effects to a psychological issue

[251] Tone, *Devices and Desires*, 142–4.

[252] "Kajokkyehoegŭi hyŏnjang," *Chosun Ilbo*, 14 December 1972.

and dismissed complaints about the vasectomy side effects as ignorant.[253] However, this psychological explanation was ineffective if "people who already got the surgery felt that," as Bae Gil-yŏng, a veteran FP field worker with ten years of experience, aptly stated.[254]

The concerns about potential adverse effects associated with male sterilization are reminiscent of those related to certain female contraceptive methods, including Lippes loops, oral contraceptive pills, and tubal ligation. Women also expressed concern about the potential adverse effects of these contraceptive methods, after learning about their neighbors' experiences. However, in contrast to men, a significant number of women accepted the technologies willingly including the demands and requests they entailed. This prompts us to consider the gendered aspect of contraceptive technology, as discussed by Jessika Van Kammen and Nelly Oudshoorn, which shaped married women's technological choices in reality. The experience of Yi Kyŏng-cha, a leader of the FPMC at the age of 33 in 1974, illustrates the gendered aspect. She recalled her neighbors' response to her husband's vasectomy, which would be the first vasectomy in the village. The people in her community accused her, not her husband, of being responsible for the procedure.

> *When the mothers' club was formed, my husband (Yi Jong-gil) took the lead and had a vasectomy. When he was heading out for the procedure, the neighbors crowded around and pointed their fingers at me, yelling "That woman is crazy," and even tried to grab him. [Because] We have only three daughters. And they argued that the surgery would render my husband a disabled person [pyŭngsin].*[255]

By 1972, the government had adopted a more aggressive strategy, which could be described as a social approach, to promote vasectomy through reserve force training. Since 1949, nearly all Korean men have been obliged to serve as active-duty soldiers, with this obligation extending to the reserve force and in civil defense since 1968.[256] Consequently, the government recognized the possibility of utilizing military training following discharge as a means of assessing young, fertile Korean men. The decision resulted in men undergoing military training receiving family planning education.

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[253] Park Chan-moo 박찬무, "Ŭihak Esei <52> chŏlmŏsŏ nahŭn agiga kŏn'ganghada 医学 에세이 <52> 젊어서 낳은 아기가 건강하다 (Medical Column: A Young Mother Gives Birth to a Healthy Baby)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 6 February 1974; Lee Hee-yong 이희영, "Namjaburimsurŭi twitt'al 남자불임술의 뒷탈 (Troubles after Male Sterilization)," *Happy Home*, February 1969, 14.

[254] "The Scene of the FP," *Chosun Ilbo*, 14 December 1972.

[255] "Ponbogi ŏmŏnihoe: imsin·ch'ulssan ank'ettago kyŏrŭihagikkaji 본보기 어머니회: 임신·출산 않겠다고 결의하기까지 (An Exemplary Mothers' Club: Until They Have Decided Not to Conceive or Give Birth)," *Happy Home*, July 1974, 18.

[256] The duration of the compulsory military service varies depending on the military unit. It ranges from 18 months (for the Army and Marines as of 2021) to 39 months (for the Navy and Air Force from 1968 to 1979).

Furthermore, those who elected to undergo a vasectomy during their training could do so either in a mobile clinic or at a designated hospital. Even in the late 1970s, those who had undergone a vasectomy during their training were excused from the remainder of their training program. In Seoul in 1983, if a reservist elected to undergo a vasectomy during a family planning education session in the morning, he could receive the procedure in the afternoon and he would be exempt from military drills for one to five days.[257] Although there was no national survey on vasectomies during reserve force training, a regional survey provides evidence of the effectiveness of this measure. In the survey of approximately 980 men who had undergone a vasectomy in a hospital affiliated with the PPFK in Busan in 1978, 70% of the respondents indicated that they were influenced by family planning education during their reserve force training.[258]

This finding resonates with observations and experiences of married women. Yi Su-yŏn's husband was one of the men who underwent a vasectomy during their reserve force training in the 1980s. She gave birth to her two daughters in 1981 and 1985, respectively. In approximately 1982, she sought an abortion because they could not afford to raise two infants simultaneously. In the late 1980s, her husband received a vasectomy during his reserve force training without any relevant discussion with her and informed her following the procedure. In fact, she did not harbor any regret regarding his decision. She believed that "raising only two [children] was hard." She reminisced that it was a period when "many people got the surgery just to avoid reserve duty."[259]

Similarly, Kim Yŏng-suk recalled the time when her husband underwent a vasectomy during his military training in the late 1980s without discussing it with her. At that time, she was using oral contraceptive pills due to the discomfort she had experienced from the insertion of an IUD. She attributed her husband's decision to undergo a vasectomy to the opportunity to take a "one-week vacation," which was provided to those who volunteered for the procedure during reserve force training. However, it is noteworthy that she recalled her husband stating that he had undergone the procedure for her benefit. Several years after the vasectomy, Kim and her husband decided to have a second child. Consequently, he underwent a vasectomy reversal, which was significantly more

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[257] Department of Medicine at Health Center in Eunpyeong Gu of Seoul, "Yebigune taehan kajokkyehoeksaŏp kanghwa 예비군에 대한 가족계획사업 강화 (Reinforcement of the Family Planning Program on Reserve Force)," 1983, National Archives of Korea, Reference No.BA0107383 13-1.

[258] Song Il-Yong 송일용, "Pusan ilbu chiyŏgŭi yŏngguburim p'isuljadŭre taehan sahoeŭihakchŏk chosa 부산 일부 지역의 영구불임 피술자들에 대한 사회의학적 조사 (Sociomedical Study on the Person Received Permanent Sterilization Method in Busan Area)," *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Public Health* 12.1 (1979): 70–8.

[259] Yi Su-yŏn, interview.

expensive (2,000,000 won) than the initial free vasectomy and required a one-week hospitalization. Following the birth of her second son in 1991, the couple discussed which was the optimal contraceptive method: tubal ligation or his second vasectomy. She suggested tubal ligation "because most women around her had received the procedure" and because she "felt rather sorry." However, her husband decided to undergo his second vasectomy in 1991.[260] Given this context, it is reasonable to infer that Kim's husband's assertion that he elected to undergo the initial vasectomy for her benefit shaped his decision, even if it was not the sole motivating factor.

This reflected a shift in attitudes toward vasectomy and the issue of responsibility for contraception between married couples. By the mid-1970s, images of husbands who had undergone the procedure were more frequently featured not only in governmental posters and the magazine *Happy Home* but also in women's magazines. The men were portrayed as responsible and considerate, prioritizing their wives' well-being. In 1975, *Women Donga* published an article on vasectomy, featuring four men—a journalist, a pilot, a TV set designer, and a poet—who shared their personal experiences with the procedure. The editor introduced the article to its female readers as follows:

> *Among contraceptives, vasectomy is known as a 100% effective contraceptive method. However, there has been some reluctance to pursue this option due to concerns about potential side effects or a* ***sense of guilt****. Let's listen to the experiences of those who have undergone vasectomies. [emphasis mine]*[261]

In the article, the journalist Pae T'ae-in presented a list of five reasons for his decision. While four out of the five reasons were a reiteration of the government's rhetoric within the FPP, the fifth reason pertained to his wife's health. Furthermore, he asserted, "I admitted the primary benefit of the vasectomy was that it emancipated my wife from the fear of pregnancy." The emphasis on his wife was a deliberate strategy employed by Pae as a professional writer to tailor his narrative to the expectations of his audience, namely the married women. However, this does not imply that the journalist's narrative was invented or exaggerated. Instead, it suggests that women's magazine readers in the mid-1970s began to anticipate a similar action from their husbands, even experiencing a sense of guilt.[262]

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[260] Kim Yŏng-suk 김영숙, interviewed by the author, 2021.

[261] "Angkkettŭ: chŏnggwansusul ihu 앙께뜨 : 精管手術 이후 (An Enquête: After Vasectomy)," *Women Donga*, May 1975, 251.

[262] "An Enquête: After Vasectomy," 251.

Chu Kyu-sun, the TV set designer, articulated a comparable viewpoint in his commentary, albeit in a less nuanced and more overt manner vis-à-vis the journalist. Following the birth of their first child, a daughter, and second child, a son whom they had desired, the couple agreed to use contraception but were unable to determine who should use it, or which method to utilize. One day, he underwent a vasectomy without his wife's knowledge, hoping it would be a "special bonus" for her. That night, his wife, who was "set free from Eve's fate," "entertained" him wholeheartedly with a bright face, he wrote.[263] This suggests that some men began to consider undergoing a vasectomy as a way to confirm the relationship between couples. The article in *Women Donga* circulated the image of the responsible husbands who have undergone a vasectomy through the voices of extraordinary men.

In contrast, *Happy Home* in 1977 reported on a group of women who actively demanded that they share the responsibility of contraception with their husbands and their husbands' actions. The article presented the opinions of members of a mothers' club, which consisted of residents of an apartment in Pusan, on vasectomy and the responsibility of contraception.

> *"Why should only women practice contraception?" "Indeed. We deliver children and raise them, and even have to practice [contraception] to avoid having [too many] children. Isn't that so unfair?" "It depends on the man. My husband had a vasectomy without telling me." "Oh, really?" "Why would I lie? It already happened a month ago." "Is it OK?" "For us, it's even better. It feels softer than before the surgery, and…." "And what?" "Oh, I don't know…" "Ok-hee's mother is a penny-pincher [kkakchaengi]!" So, other mothers badgered their husbands to have a vasectomy.*[264]

For these women, vasectomy represented a contraceptive technology that allowed them to assume mutual responsibility with their husbands as sexual partners and parents. It also enabled them to boast that they had a considerate husband who was willing to accept those responsibilities. Additionally, it allowed them to enjoy the collateral benefits of sexual pleasure.

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[263] "An Enquête: After Vasectomy," 253.

[264] "Chŏnggwansusul, nŏmunŏmu chohayo 정관수술, 너무너무 좋아요 (Vasectomy, I Really like It!)," *Happy Home*, February 1977, 39–40.

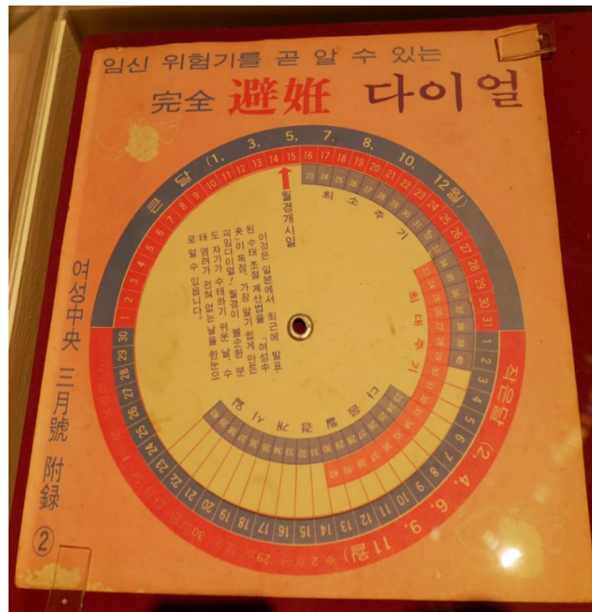

Figure 4-2 A paper dial for contraception offered as a supplement of the magazine Women Joongang in the 1970s. In the special exhibition "People in Numbers: The Korean Contemporary History from a Perspective of Population" in 2021, National Museum of Korean Contemporary History. Photo by author.

While male sterilization was re-evaluated as a contraceptive technology for responsible husbands, the rhythm method underwent modifications throughout the 1970s and 1980s. As Sŏ Chŏng-sun and Ch'oe Hwa-ja did, many women used the rhythm method for various reasons during this period. The method did not demand the use of specialized devices, substances, or interruptions during sexual intercourse. It also did not request its users to accept concerns about potential side effects. Consequently, despite its relatively low success rate and the necessity of understanding the physiological mechanisms of contraception, as well as the commitment to calculation and abstinence over a specific period, some Korean women were willing to accept these demands and requests.

In the 1970s, the magazine *Women Joongang* offered a paper dial for "*wanjŏn p'iim* [perfect contraception]" as a supplement to the magazine. The device was designed to assist users in calculating the "dangerous time for pregnancy" based on the first day of their menstrual cycle. [Fig.4-2] Such devices, devised to assist with the rhythm method, were distributed not only through women's magazines but also by FP field workers or individuals claiming to be field workers. In 1974, an editor of *Happy Home* advised its readers to be cautious when dealing with such promoters.

> *Issues related to the douche [*chirsech'ŭkki*] or a menstrual period quick calculator [*wŏlgyŏng jugi soksangi*] have become a social problem these days. Recently, it's come to our attention that some people are promoting some devices with a high failure rate or ineffective methods that don't align with our lifestyle. They're even going as far as to slander the best contraceptive methods, namely oral contraceptive pills, the loop, and vasectomy. It is a shame when it comes to household budgets*

or a national project. At PPFK or the government, we don't recommend the method you mentioned [the douche] as a contraceptive. I'd like to take this opportunity to caution readers not to be drawn to such methods that health centers do not recommend.[265]

In the mid-1970s, some members of the Catholic Church, which had previously opposed all contraceptives in 1960, began to promote a modified rhythm method known as the Billings Ovulation Method or Billings method. This method is based on the observation that the timing of ovulation can be predicted not only by monitoring the menstrual cycle but also by assessing the condition of vaginal discharge. It is incumbent upon women to calculate their ovulation cycle and monitor their vaginal discharge, using the method developed by Australian physicians John and Evelyn Livingston Billings.[266] The South Korean Catholic Church endeavored to disseminate the "natural contraceptive method" beyond the Catholic community through several hospitals affiliated with the Catholic Church across the country.[267] In addition, the Church disseminated information about the method not only through periodicals for Catholics but also through public magazines. For example, in 1975, the magazine *Sunday Seoul* introduced the Billings method, which was described as a contraceptive method "without side effects that women could use easily by themselves," in an article by Kim Seung-jo, professor at the OB/GYN department at Seoul St. Mary's Hospital at the Catholic University of Korea. He delineated the fundamental principles of the method and proffered pragmatic counsel, including the observation of "toilet paper after using the toilet" to ascertain the condition of cervical mucus and chart it for potential users.[268]

In the 1980s, the rhythm method was promoted as a safe contraceptive method for couples who shared their responsibility for their contraceptive choices. In 1983, when John and Evelyn Livingston Billings, the developers of the Billings Method, visited South Korea, an article conveyed the method and their visit in a remarkable way. The article cited the developers' comments and introduced the

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[265] "Kajokkyehoek sangdamsil 가족계획 상담실 (Family Planning Counseling Office)," *Happy Home*, July 1974, 29.

[266] Charles W Norris, "The Life and Times of John J. Billings: The Mucus Symptom, a Physiologic Marker of Women's Fertility," *The Linacre Quarterly* 77.3 (2010): 323–28, 323.

[267] Park Seungmann 박승만, "Ch'ŏnyŏnhan chayŏn'gwa wanjŏnhan chayŏn: 1970nyŏndae chungban han'guk kat'ollik kajokkyehoek saŏpkwa chayŏnp'iimbŏbŭi kyŏnghap 천연한 자연과 완전한 자연: 1970 년대 중반 한국 가톨릭 가족계획 사업과 자연피임법의 경합 ('Innate Nature' and 'Complete Nature': The Catholic Natural Family Planning Program and the Competition of Natural Methods in mid-1970s Korea)," *Ŭisahak* 29.1 (2020): 81–120, 94.

[268] "Chŏmaekkwanch'allo chŏkchunghanŭn chayŏnp'iimbŏp 粘液관찰로 적중하는 自然避姙法 (A Natural Contraceptive Method Based on Mucus Observation)," *Sunday Seoul*, 14 September 1975, 17–18.

method as having "no side effects, shame, or discomfort caused by artificial contraception" and "furthermore, by directing their collaboration, it strengthens the spiritual bond between couples."[269]

The shift in the relationship between married couples influenced not only the rhythm method but also another traditional contraceptive technology: spermicides. Indeed, since the government authorized the importation of contraceptive products in 1961 for the FPP, a plethora of spermicides has been sold, advertised, and used. Throughout the late 1970s, Hanil Pharmaceutical Company advertised its Sallup'ŭ tablets as "non-oral contraceptive medication" with no side effects, targeting women who were concerned about the side effects of oral contraceptive pills and dissatisfied with the necessity of taking a pill daily.[270] In 1980, Han-mi Pharmaceutical Company entered the spermicidal market with the release of its spermicidal suppository, Nowon.[271] During the early 1980s, the latecomer promoted its product as a contraceptive for family planning, employing a strategy similar to that of the market leader. This involved emphasizing the importance of contraception for population control and targeting women who were concerned about the potential side effects of oral contraceptives or intrauterine devices.[272]

However, in the mid-1980s, the company modified its strategy, aligning with the idea of a shared responsibility for contraception between couples. The company employed a multifaceted advertising strategy, utilizing both women's magazines and tabloids with male readerships. The advertisements asserted that the spermicide tablet was equally effective as the chemical oral contraceptive pill, but safer than the hormonal contraceptive method.[273] Indeed, the assertion regarding the product's efficacy was, in fact, an exaggeration, and the company was even cautioned by the government regarding this matter. Nevertheless, the company persisted in its arguments. The advertisement employed phrases such as "the way to make your wife happy" and "wisdom to keep women's health" to promote Nowon as a superior "contraceptive medicine," focusing on husbands and promising no

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[269] "「Chayŏnp'iimbŏp」 pujagyongŏpsŏ kakkwang ch'anganja ho pillingsŭ paksa pubu naehan kangyŏn 「自然피임법」副作用없어 각광 창안자 濠 빌링스博士 부부 來韓강연 ('The Natural Contraceptive Method' That Has No Side Effect Is Spotlighted: The Developer Australian Dr. Mr. and Mrs. Billing's Lecture in South Korea," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 9 November 1983, 7.

[270] Sallup'ŭ, Hanil Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Women Donga*, September 1976.

[271] Minister of Health and Social Affairs, Bureau of Medicine Affairs, Division of Medical Affairs, "A Manufacturing Approval of Nowon Vaginal Suppository as Medicine" in Files of "Medicine Approvals," 1980, National Archives of Korea, Reference No.BA0127620.

[272] Nowon, Han-Mi Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Chosun Ilbo,* 3 August 1983.

[273] Nowon, Han-Mi Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Sunday Seoul,* 16 March 1985.

adverse side effects on their wives."[274] It is important to note that the spermicide is a female contraceptive technology that operates within the vagina, though it requests the cooperation of both partners. In this context, the advertisers assumed that its prospective users would be couples in which a responsible husband who recommended the "safe" contraceptive for his wife's benefit or a husband who aspires to portray himself in such a manner.

Such advertisements reflected the emerging idea that a good husband should consider his wife's health and thus assume responsibility for contraception. The advertisement encouraged prospective users of the contraceptive suppository to join the new group of the ideal husbands by using the product. In other words, the advertisement asserted that although the contraceptive requested and demanded somewhat inconvenient pre-intercourse manipulation, it allowed its male users to fulfill the role of an ideal husband.

In a similar vein, condoms that demanded male partners' collaboration began to draw the attention of couples who considered mutual responsibility in contraception and were concerned about the potential side effects of other contraceptives. Yi Mi-kyŏng and her husband, who was cited at the beginning of this chapter, represent a case in point. Following the birth of her first son in 1989, she began to explore contraceptive methods that would allow for temporary contraception for spacing purpose. In contrast to the majority of Korean women and her neighbors, who chose IUDs or oral contraceptive pills for this purpose, she chose condoms.

Subsequently, following the birth of her second and final child, she once again elected to use condoms as a contraceptive method. As previously discussed, while a number of Korean women who had delivered at the hospital had undergone a tubal ligation procedure during a C-section or postpartum period, Yi did not undergo such a procedure. The medical staff at the hospital where she visited for her prenatal care and delivery did not recommend tubal ligation. This was due, in part, to the fact that the hospital was established by the Catholic Church. However, a more significant reason was that she was able to advocate for shared contraceptive responsibility with her husband and engage in negotiations with him. When her husband proposed another female contraceptive method, implying tubal ligation, she declined, asserting "women could not even practice contraception" due to the burden of pregnancy and childrearing. Furthermore, she had heard rumors that "people got sick or got bad more frequently after the loop [IUD] is inserted." Consequently, the condom, which she perceived as having "the fewest side effects" and being the least harmful, became their best

[274] Nowon, Han-Mi Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 31 January 1985; Nowon, Han-Mi Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Chosun Ilbo*, 26 May 1985.

contraceptive method. Obtaining condoms was also the responsibility of her husband, as he worked at a health center that distributed condoms until 1995, making it a relatively straightforward task. For her and her husband, condoms were a contraceptive technology that allowed for mutual effort in contraception without side effects and encouraged such cooperation.[275]

As with women in other locations and periods, South Korean women used contraceptive technologies that were available to them at the time. These included substances for self-abortion, a gold ring, bootleg condoms, spermicides, and abortion. This occurred even before the state relaxed legal restrictions and began promoting contraception in the name of family planning to control the population in 1961.

Since the inception of the national family planning program in South Korea, a number of contraceptive technologies have been introduced. By the late 1970s, Korean women, regardless of region, class, or income, had access to a comprehensive range of contraceptive technologies. Korean women were able to obtain oral contraceptive pills with relative ease through the government network for the FPP or by purchasing the contraceptive medication from pharmacies without the necessity of a physician's prescription. From the mid-1970s onward, women were able to undergo laparoscopic tubal ligation at minimal cost or even free of charge. Despite the illegality of abortion until 2020, the government indirectly supported its use through various measures, thereby rendering it one of the more accessible methods of contraception. In this regard, the governmental FPP removed or alleviated several conditions—regulation, access to medical services, and aversion toward contraception—that constrained women seeking to control their fertility. These conditions were significant obstacles for women seeking to exercise their reproductive rights, challenges that persist in many countries. In this sense, it can be argued that the aforementioned technologies were not achieved by Korean women, but rather provided by the government, which considered reducing population growth to be one of the measures for economic development. Additionally, international organizations and Western states, which regarded demographic intervention in the population of developing countries as a preventive measure for population explosion, contributed to improving access to the contraceptives by developing them or funding mass distribution programs in the country.

Nevertheless, this does not indicate that Korean women were mere passive recipients of population control tools. The process through which several contraceptives became accessible was

[275] Yi Mi-kyŏng, interview.

not a straightforward one. In addition, individual contraceptive technologies still demanded and requested certain actions from their users, depending on how their bodies responded to the technologies and the sociocultural context in which the women were situated. They were forced to contend with indifferent or hostile husbands and in-laws, who desired more children, particularly sons. They also had to contend with economic constraints that limited their access to contraceptives, including the aftermath of the war, which brought desperate industrial conditions, and poor infrastructure in rural areas, which made it challenging for them to access hospitals or pharmacies. Moreover, they had to contend with the physical effects of contraceptive use, including discomfort from condoms or spermicides, side effects from oral contraceptive pills or IUDs, the pain and fear associated with surgical abortion and tubal ligation.

Consequently, women found themselves in the position of having to consider which contraceptive technology, among several options, was best suited to their own bodies in such material and sociocultural contexts. In the process, married women in South Korea chose and used various contraceptive technologies in ways that differed from the expectations of the developers and distributors of the technology. In the 1950s, when Korea was experiencing economic difficulties, some women resorted to using American condoms that had been distributed to protect the U.S. Army from venereal diseases. Some Korean women who were strongly motivated to avoid pregnancy used the Lippes loop, which was developed as an “inexpensive device that requires little motivation for developing countries,” as covert contraceptives against their husbands or parents-in-law, accepting side effects. Some women used oral contraceptive pills, which were developed to regulate ovulation, in order to ascertain specific details regarding the timing of their child’s birth including the year, season, month, or even the day. Some women combined abortion, which the government had virtually permitted for population control purpose, with amniocentesis and ultrasound scans, which had been developed for prenatal fetal health assessments, in order to determine the sex of their fetus. Since the late 1970s, there has been a shift in the relationship between married couples and the concept of sharing contraceptive responsibility. This shift has allowed married women to consider traditional male contraceptive technologies as alternatives. In some cases, women had even urged their husbands to use vasectomies and condoms, which allowed them to avoid the side effects of female contraceptives. In other cases, husbands have volunteered to use these methods.

By employing the concepts of the technology’s affordance and mechanisms, this chapter provided a comprehensive and nuanced account of how Korean women chose and used diverse contraceptive technologies in detail. These women interpreted each technology’s requests, demands, and affordances differently than Western developers, advocates, and Korean bureaucrats anticipated during the technology’s development and dissemination. Even when women’s choices align with the

recommendations of male experts, from the perspective of women users, the requests and demands from each contraceptive technology and what the technology allowed them was different from what the developers had envisioned. This demonstrates women's active engagement with contraceptive technology, which challenges the narrative of passive acceptance or victimization by modern contraceptives designed for population control in developing countries.

Concurrently, this chapter presented an alternative to the linear narrative in which new technology has replaced old technology. By using old technologies such as condoms or rhythm methods, Korean women users have vitalized the old contraceptive technologies and given them new meanings. In so doing, women have played a role in shaping the technological landscape in which a number of contraceptive technologies have co-existed and in relation to non-contraceptive technologies. In the process, women and their bodies have undergone changes, whether significant or minor, prompting them to contemplate, understand, and feel their intimate bodies in ways distinct from those of their grandmothers and mothers. This is the primary focus of the following chapter.

5. Vaginal Technologies and the Ideal Vaginal State

In 1986, the women's magazine *Women Donga* published an article by Nam Sang-sŏk, a journalist in the Investigation Department of *the Dong-A Ilbo*, which questioned the efficacy of "feminine washes." The article written by begins as follows:

> *Recently, sales of feminine wash, which experts consider non-essential, have skyrocketed. It is safe to say that the competition among their manufacturers is intense. What exactly is the feminine wash?*[1]

In his article, the term "feminine wash" was used to refer to a particular category of cleansing solutions designed for use on the female genital area. He asserted that the products, which were promoted by the competing manufacturers as effective preventive and therapeutic measures for a wide range of ailments, have replaced some substances previously used by women for genital cleansing, including lukewarm water, vinegar, boric acid, and alum. These products, he claimed, had become a "necessity." Indeed, as the author's affiliation and cynical tone indicate, the title of the inquiry regarding feminine washes was rhetorical. The objective of the author was to critique the manufacturers who exaggerated the products' efficacy by presenting physicians' opinions that such products were unnecessary and medical facts about diseases related to the female genitals. Furthermore, he implicitly condemned the majority of Korean women who were using these unnecessary products "without any special reasons," despite these medical facts.[2]

The magazine article illustrates that during the mid-1980s the feminine wash was a popular product, to the extent that their manufacturers' competitions attracted the attention of a journalist at a major newspaper. Concurrently, the article indicates that women were already cleansing their vaginas with the aforementioned substances, which I refer to as "feminine technologies." In this context, the journalist's characterization of these women as gullible consumers overlooks the fact that

[1] Nam Sang-sŏk 남상석, "Yŏsŏngyong sech'ŏkche kwayŏn hyogwa inna 여성용 세척제 과연 효과 있나 (Whether Feminine Washes Are Really Effective)," *Women Donga*, July 1986, 352.

[2] Nam Sang-sŏk, "Whether Feminine Washes Are Really Effective," 352–27.

they had already engaged with various forms of feminine technology related to their vaginas for aa range of reasons, even before the manufacturers' promotions. This chapter examines the reasons that led women to use such vaginal technologies, with a focus on the shifts in the ideal vaginal state, the medical discourse on vaginal discharge, and women's experiences related to their vaginas and bodies.

As with other feminine technologies, those technologies related to the vagina have been the subject of minimal scholarly attention. However, recent concerns about vaginal practices and their adverse effects on women's health have prompted some scholars to direct their attention toward vaginal technologies, which encompass devices, methods, and substances for "all efforts to wash, modify, cut, cleanse, enhance, dry, tighten, lubricate, or loosen the vagina, labia, clitoris, or hymen."[3] In the context of the HIV epidemic, public health experts began to investigate the correlation between HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), with a focus on vaginal practices, particularly among women in Africa, where HIV has been a significant public health concern since the mid-1990s.[4]

While initial studies concentrated on the role of vaginal practices in the transmission of STDs and their impact on women's health in the early 2000s, scholars began to examine the multifaceted motivations that have shaped the practices beyond health issues. For example, in studies on the vaginal practices of women in African and Asian countries conducted in the mid-2000s, Adriane Hilber and others demonstrate that the practices were driven by a range of motivations, including the desire to make their vaginas drier, to lubricate for intercourse, to reduce the discomfort from discharge, or to maintain general health. They argue that, despite these heterogeneous motivations, women's vaginal practices were ultimately pursued with the aim of achieving the "desired vaginal state."[5]

A similar concern about women's health has prompted investigations into the motivation of Western women for using so-called vaginal feminine hygiene products, which include "vaginal washes,

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[3] Jun Zhang et al., "Vaginal Douching and Adverse Health Effects: A Meta-Analysis," *American Journal of Public Health* 87.7 (1997): 1207–11.

[4] For the studies on vaginal practices from the perspective of their adverse health effects, see Luciano Sandala et al, "'Dry Sex'and HIV Infection among Women Attending a Sexually Transmitted Diseases Clinic in Lusaka, Zambia," *AIDS* 9 (1995): S61–68; Gerard Gresenguet et al., "HIV Infection and Vaginal Douching in Central Africa," *AIDS* (London, England) 11.1 (1997): 101–06; Karen E Kun, "Vaginal Drying Agents and HIV Transmission," *International Family Planning Perspectives* 24 (1998): 93–94.

[5] Adriane Martin Hilber et al., "A Cross Cultural Study of Vaginal Practices and Sexuality: Implications for Sexual Health," *Social Science & Medicine* 70.3 (2010): 392–400; Adriane Martin Hilber et al., "Vaginal Practices as Women's Agency in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Synthesis of Meaning and Motivation through Meta-Ethnography," *Social Science & Medicine* 74.9 (2012): 1311–23.

gels, wipes, powders, deodorant sprays, suppositories, anti-itch creams, and douches." Amanda Jenkins and others investigate the factors that have motivated Canadian women to use vaginal hygiene products and how these motivations have been represented. Based on the results of interviews and surveys, they argue that the Canadian women used such products to attain the ideal of a "clean and fresh vagina." This ideal was shaped by the idea that the vagina is fundamentally pathologic and problematic in Western culture. As a result, women began to consider feminine hygiene products as a solution for "abnormal and offensive" vaginal odor and secretion. Consequently, the authors argue that even though women did not explicitly define the concepts of "clean" or "fresh," they were using these products to achieve a. state of psychological cleanliness.[6]

The interest in the ideal female genital is also evident in studies on female genital cosmetic surgery (hereafter FGCS) in the Anglosphere. With the increase in FGCS since the 2000s, a few feminist scholars began to examine the surgeries and their sociocultural implications. For example, Virginia Braun has explored surgical female genital alterations, including labiaplasty (labia minora reduction), labia majora augmentation (tissue removal), liposuction, virginal tightening, and hymen reconstruction, as a cultural product.[7] In the article on sexual pleasure in the accounts of FGCS, which was based on media written in English and interviews of surgeons working in the Anglosphere, she examines how discourses that acknowledge women's sexual pleasure and the right to pursue it were represented in the accounts of FGCS and reinforced these discourses.

Similarly, Sara Rodrigues discusses vaginoplasty and labiaplasty as technologies through which Foucauldian power disciplined subjects who possessed female reproductive bodies. In her analysis, she argues that pornography and sex education books have rendered the ideal vagina suitable for penetrative sexual intercourse. This idealized image has led women to pursue such procedures for their partners or for their own confidence. Simultaneously, the interactions between the women, the

[6] Sara E Crann et al., "Women's Genital Body Work: Health, Hygiene and Beauty Practices in the Production of Idealized Female Genitalia," *Feminism & Psychology* 27.4 (2017): 510–29; Amanda L Jenkins et al., "'Clean and Fresh': Understanding Women's Use of Vaginal Hygiene Products," *Sex Roles* 78.9 (2018): 697–709.

[7] Virginia Braun and Celia Kitzinger, "The Perfectible Vagina: Size Matters," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 3.3 (2001): 263–77; Virginia Braun, "In Search of (Better) Sexual Pleasure: Female Genital 'Cosmetic' Surgery'," *Sexualities*, 8.4 (2005): 407–24; Virginia Braun, "Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery: A Critical Review of Current Knowledge and Contemporary Debates," *Journal of Women's Health* 19.7 (2010): 1393–1407.

technologies, and surgeons have reproduced such desiring subjects for the ideal vagina, thereby enhancing biopolitics.[8]

While the majority of the literature on vaginal technologies concentrates on the relationship between the ideal genital and sexuality, a few studies discuss the historical contexts that were intertwined with the technologies and the ideal. In her article on FGCS, Leonore Tiefer examines ways in which the shift in the medical environment in the United States facilitated the rise of FGCS in the late 1990s. In the 1970s, American physicians were confronted with a series of changes—an oversupply of surgeons, the advent of managed care to limit insurance coverage, the emergence of new products, and the evolution of marketing practices. These changes led medical specialists to head the beauty industry in the 1980s and 1990s and subsequently to enter the genital cosmetic surgery market in the late 1990s and beyond.[9]

In a similar vein, in her study on douches in the United States, Michelle Ferranti traces how the purpose of douches had changed in accordance with the shifts in medical discourse, social transformations, and douche manufacturers' strategies. In the late nineteenth century, the Comstock Law prohibited the public dissemination of information regarding contraceptives and medical treatments involving the use of water, which were prevalent within the Water Cure Movement. The devices were predominantly promoted and sold as devices for contraception or water treatments. However, by the 1930s, both the act and the movement had receded from public attention. Moreover, medical practitioners began to argue that "the vagina is functionally self-cleaning." Consequently, douche manufacturers were compelled to devise a novel rationale to persuade women, and they discerned the potential for the nascent concern about malodorous bodies, which personal hygiene product manufacturers had already employed. They developed the concept of "deodorizing bodies" and products for them. In the 1940s, douche manufacturers commenced promoting their products as a device for a "fresh-smelling vagina."[10]

The existing literature on vaginal technologies in Western societies sheds light on the ways in which the motivations behind the use of vaginal technology have been shaped within the context of shifting the sociocultural and historical circumstances. However, the relationships between the actors

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[8] Sara Rodrigues, "From Vaginal Exception to Exceptional Vagina: The Biopolitics of Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery," *Sexualities* 15.7 (2012): 778–94.

[9] Leonore Tiefer, "Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery: Freakish or Inevitable? Analysis from Medical Marketing, Bioethics, and Feminist Theory," *Feminism & Psychology* 18.4 (2008): 466–79.

[10] Michelle Ferranti, "From Birth Control to That 'Fresh Feeling'": A Historical Perspective on Feminine Hygiene in Medicine and Media," *Women & Health* 49.8 (2010): 592–607.

who involved in the process are often simplified to active suppliers, such as physicians and manufacturers who promoted the ideal vagina versus women consumers who responded passively to the suppliers. Studies on feminine vaginal hygiene products in Western countries have described women as gullible consumers who used the products despite medical experts' advice that such products were unnecessary or even harmful. This description resonates with the aforementioned Korean male journalist who implicitly criticized Korean women in the emerging feminine hygiene market over three decades ago.

Indeed, such assumptions underlie not only studies on feminine hygiene products but also work on personal hygiene products. For instance, in his book *Soft Soap, Hard Sell,* Vincent Vinikas argues that businesspeople played a role in the rise of the personal hygiene product market in the United States during the early twentieth century, contributing to the popularity of the products represented by Lifebuoy Soap and Listerine. He argues, aided by the development of the media industry since the 1920s, personal hygiene product manufacturers fabricated "a fearful, bashful preoccupation with their natural odors," which is the same concern that Ferranti mentioned in the history of douches. In response to this concern, the manufacturers facilitated the commoditization of products designed to remove or disguise odors, including mouthwashes, soaps, and deodorants, with considerable success.[11] Similarly, in *Stronger than Dirty,* Juliann Sivulka characterizes soap as "an artifact of culture" and argues that the proliferation of the personal hygiene products among Americans was a psychological process, not "a natural progression (…) based on scientific rationale."[12]

These studies tend to assume that social and cultural factors, such as the evolution of media, sex education, or the promotion of hygiene products through Western/biomedical discourse and the Western ideal of the vagina, have influenced women's utilization of feminine hygiene products. However, the case of Korean women, who have historically utilized devices and substances for vaginal cleansing for a multitude of reasons prior to the advent of comparable media, sex education, and medical discourses, indicates that the Western ideal of the vagina and body is insufficient to fully account for Korean women's vaginal cleansing practices.

In this regard, this chapter employs a balanced approach that considers people's ideas and behaviors related to their bodies and health in both cultural and biological dimensions, as Nancy Tomes suggests in *The Gospel of Germs*. In examining the history of hygienic practices and public

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[11] Vincent Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell: American Hygiene in an Age of Advertisement* (Iowa State Press, 1992).

[12] Juliann Sivulka, *Stronger than Dirt: A Cultural History of Advertising Personal Hygiene in America, 1875 to 1940* (Humanity Books, 2001).

health in the United States from the 1870s to the 1930s, she challenges the perspective that views such practices as a mere consequence of the germ fear that was a cultural construction. By acknowledging the cultural dimension of these practices, shaped by the mobilization of medical discourse by entrepreneurs and the fear of germs among people, she highlights that these fears originated from the prevalence of severe, albeit common, experiences of infectious diseases at the time. Consequently, for people who frequently witnessed the suffering and mortality caused by these diseases, the practices were crucial preventive measures that ordinary women were able to implement at home.[13]

This chapter builds upon Tomes' balanced approach by underscoring the cultural and biological dimensions that shaped women's perceptions of their vaginas and their choices of suitable technologies for their own vaginas and bodies. I call the cultural and biological dimensions 'cultural and biological references,' which have served as a basis for women in evaluating the condition of their vaginas. The references encompass medical discourses that define an ideal vaginal state, advertisements for vaginal products, and more significantly, the fluid female bodies that women perceive and experiences. Individual female bodies change at the level of everyday lives. Along with such individual changes, South Korean women's bodies underwent several changes throughout the second half of the twentieth century, which could be called historical changes: moving beyond their homes; engaging with diverse technologies related to menstruation or contraception. By considering such diverse changes, this chapter describes how Korean women chose a certain vaginal technology and used it based on their own interpretation of medical discourses and changes in bodies in the sociocultural context surrounding them.

As in the preceding two chapters, this chapter employs the concept of affordance of technology and its mechanisms to analyze the reasons why women chose a specific vaginal technology and how they used it. Korean women selected and utilized vaginal technologies for a variety of reasons, and, if they determined the technology was not suitable for their bodies, they sought an alternative. It is important to note, however, that women's engagement with vaginal technology differed from that with menstrual and contraceptive technologies during the 1970s and 1980s. As women considered menstrual technologies and contraceptive technologies indispensable, contingent on changes in their lives, they attempted to accept demands and requests of these technologies or actively sought alternative options. Conversely, feminine washes and other vaginal technologies were never considered necessities by Korean women. Consequently, when women felt the technology was not

[13] Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Harvard University Press, 1999).

fitting their bodies, they promptly discontinued its use rather than accepting the technology's demands, such as tolerating adverse effects or exploring alternatives.

This chapter's initial section commences in colonial Korea with an examination of the medical discourses on vaginal discharge associated with a disease or symptom designated as *taehajŭng* or *naengjŭng.* This illustrates the preexisting vaginal practices of Korean women and an emerging interest in women's bodies within the country.[14] The medical discourse would shape women's idea of their vagina, as well as the subsequent medical discourses that emerged following Korean's liberation from Japan. Additionally, it would influence the ways that relevant product manufacturers promoted their products. The second section begins with an advertisement for a contraceptive douche in 1960 when contraception became a public issue. This section examines the medical discourses related to vaginal discharges and the changes in married women's ideas of their vaginas and sexuality that occurred under the national family planning program (FPP). Furthermore, this section also considers the responses to such shifts in the market related to vaginal technologies. The third section opens with an advertisement for feminine washes in 1982, which marked South Korea's transition into a consumer society. During the 1980s, an increasing number of women experienced changes in their bodies as a result of their contraceptive endeavors and evolving lifestyles. By associating these bodily changes with preexisting medical discourses and sexual desires, entrepreneurs sought to position vaginal products as a necessity for the general female population.

5.1. Women's Disease and Vaginal Discharge

***Taehajŭng*, *Nangjŭng*, and *Puinbyŏng* during the Colonial Period**

In 1935, *The Chosun Ilbo* published an article that provides a glimpse into the medical discourse surrounding the ideal vaginal state in colonial Korea. In the article, the author, Kim Suk-whan, an OB/GYN at Keijō Imperial University, dedicated the majority of the text to a women's disease known as *naengjŭng* and its associated symptoms. According to him, the disease is represented by unusual

[14] The term "*jŭng* (症)" could be translated into symptoms in biomedicine, and thus, *taehajŭng* could be symptoms related to *taeha*. However, at the same time, *taeha*jŭng was used to refer to a certain disease other than symptoms, and its definition was flexible, as I will discuss. Thus, in this chapter, I use the term "*taeha*jŭng" instead of "*taeha* disease" or "*taeha* symptoms."

taeha, which can be translated as "vaginal discharge." To elucidate the pathological vaginal discharges, he mentioned the vaginal state of healthy women, as follows.

> Taeha *comes in many forms, which range from a clear one like tap water to one that is almost pus-like, and from runny noses caused by a cold to bean-curd dregs [*biji*]. They can be classified as odorous or non-odorous, bloody or non-bloody. (…) They [*taeha*] mainly come from the vagina and uterus, particularly the entrance. (…) The nose and mouth are always moist, but a cold or mouth ailment causes a runny nose and an increase in saliva. Similarly, a healthy woman experiences some vaginal discharge, but if she gets a disease, it causes a change in amount, property, and flow of the vaginal discharge, which is called "flowing* taeha*."*[15]

To explain pathological *taeha* (帶下) or vaginal discharge, he provided a more detailed medical account of a healthy woman's vagina, in which the Döderlein bacillus (*toedellain* 氏 桿菌) serves as a defense against the invasion of several germs and glycogen (*kurigogyŏn*) is broken down into lactic acid (乳酸), resulting in state of constant acidity. An increase in lactic acid levels results in a shift in vaginal acidity, the demise of the Döderlein bacillus, and the occupation of other germs, which would then begin to create toxins. He linked this mechanism to the practice of "frequent cleansing of the genitals [*kukpu*] using unsterilized devices and medicine" when women observe a small amount of *taeha*. Such a practice, he asserted, would result in the removal of lactic acid and, which would consequently be detrimental. His explanation is consistent with current medical advice to refrain from interfering with the self-cleaning mechanisms of the vagina to maintain bacterial balance. Indeed, his remark was influenced by Western biomedicine, which had arrived in Korea three decades ago and had permeated medical discourses. At the same time, his article was aligned with an emerging interest in women's bodies and health, which were intertwined with vaginal practices such as cleansing genitals.

Recent studies that focus on the role of women and their bodies in colonial Korea demonstrate that the colonial setting led not only Japanese authorities, but also Korean social reformers attended women as mothers of the colonized nation. As a consequence of the changes, Korean women's bodies became a matter of public concern, necessitating medical examination and intervention by medical

[15] Kim Suk-whan 김석환, "Naengbyŏnge taehaya(1), (2) puinne-paektaehawa hwangdaeha 냉병에 대하야(1), (2) 부인네 백대하와 황대하 (Naengbyŏng(1), (2) Women's White *Taeha* and Yellow *Taeha*)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 25 December 1935; 27 December 1935.

practitioners as well as women themselves.[16] As Sonja M. Kim illustrates, women's expectations and interest in their bodies gave rise to pervasive discourses on women's diseases, collectively known as *puinbyŏng* (婦人病). *Puinbyŏng*, which can be translated to "married women's diseases or illnesses," was derived from traditional East Asian medicine and was used to refer not only to women's ailments or illnesses but also to female infertility in colonial Korea. This "nebulous disease category" was associated with women's reproductive concerns and the role of women as mothers.[17]

During the colonial period, information about *puinbyŏng* as part of the knowledge of women's health frequently appeared in newspapers and magazines that provided educational content for women, albeit a select few, who were literate. Since the 1910s, Japanese authorities had disseminated *puinbyŏng* knowledge through their channels, including *the Maeil Sinbo*. With the lifting of the total ban on speech, press, and assembly triggered by the 1919 March 1st Movement, Korean newspapers written in Korean began to assume a role in the production and dissemination of *puinbyŏng* knowledge. From 1920 to 1940, *the Chosun Ilbo* published even 524 articles on *puinbyŏng* before ceasing publication in 1940, along with other Korean newspapers.[18]

In the flood discourses on *puinbyŏng*, along with menstrual disorders such as amenorrhea or dysmenorrhea, *taehajŭng* was identified as one of two significant symptoms of *puinbyŏng*.[19] The present chapter does not primarily address women's diseases. It is, however, noteworthy that the ways in which Korean physicians discussed these issues that influenced not only medical discourses on the vagina but also women's perceptions of the vagina and the use of vaginal technologies because, even after liberation. While physicians produced discourses on *puinbyŏng* based on biomedical concepts and epistemology, they also employed terminology drawn from traditional East Asian medicine, as evidenced by Kim Suk-whan's article.

In traditional East Asian medicine, menstrual irregularities and *taehajŭng* were important pillars in the explanation of *puinbyŏng*, which is a holistic approach to the human body. In this approach, the monthly menstrual cycle was regarded as one of "the most fundamental of natural cycles." Illness

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[16] Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945* (Univ of California Press, 2008); Jin-kyung Park, "Bodies for Empire: Biopolitics, Reproduction, and Sexual Knowledge in Late Colonial Korea," *Ŭisahak* 23.2 (2014): 203–38.

[17] M. Sonja Kim, *Imperatives of Care: Women and Medicine in Colonial Korea* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 109.

[18] Park Jin-kyung 박진경, "Chilbyŏngŭi kŭndae: iljegangjŏmgi puinbyŏngŭi ŭimiwa maeyakkwanggo 질병의 근대: 일제강점기 부인병의 의미와 매약광고 (Modernity of Disease: Exploring Meanings of Women's Disease and Patent Medical Advertisement in Colonial Korea)," *Asiayŏsŏngyŏn'gu* 60.3 (2021): 45–93.

[19] M. Sonja Kim, *Imperatives of Care: Women and Medicine in Colonial Korea* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 108–32.

associated with *taeha* was understood to indicate not only diseases of the female reproductive organs but also disorders of general organs and the entire body.[20] For instance, in *Tongŭi Bogam*, an encyclopedic work on East Asian medicine published in 1613, the author, Doctor Hŏ Chun provides comprehensive treatments for regular menstruation and diagnoses and treatments for five distinct types of *taeha*, or vaginal discharge—blue, red, white, yellow, and black. According to him, each color corresponds to a disorder in five organs (*ojang*, 五臟): the liver, heart, spleen, lungs, and kidney.[21] Therefore, in traditional medicine, *taeha* or *taehajŭng* indicated excessive vaginal discharge caused by reasons other than diseases of the female reproductive organs.

Since the colonial period in Korea, Western or biomedical knowledge has been regarded as superior. The majority of Korean physicians have expressed skepticism regarding the efficacy of traditional medicine as a counterpart to biomedicine and a holistic approach.[22] Notwithstanding, physicians discussed menstrual irregularities (*wŏlgyŏngbulssun*) and *taehajŭng* as significant symptoms of *puinbyŏng* and employed the terms, albeit within the context of biomedical epistemology.[23] As a result of the influence of biomedicine and patient communication, physicians virtually redefined menstruation and *taehajŭng* as symptoms of various disorders, aligning them with the individual female reproductive organs.

Conversely, as Sonja Kim notes, the term *naeng* was used in a somewhat vague manner. In traditional medicine, the term *naeng* (冷) was primarily associated with coldness. During the colonial period in Korea, *naengjŭng* (冷症) was used to describe a sensation of intense coldness in the feet and

[20] Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Univ of California Press, 1997), 326.

[21] Hŏ Chun 許浚, *Tongŭibogam naegyŏngp'yŏn che3kwŏn* 東醫寶鑑 內景篇卷之三 (Precious Mirror of Eastern Medicine, Internal Bodily Elements, Volume 3) (1613) https://mediclassics.kr/books/8/volume/3/#content_1307 [accessed, 21 November 2022].

[22] Yeo In-sok 여인석, "Hanmalgwa singminji sigi sŏyangŭihagŭi hanŭihak insikkwa suyong 한말과 식민지 시기 서양의학의 한의학 인식과 수용 (Traditional Medicine Seen from the Perspective of Western Medicine during the Late 19th and Early 20th Century in Korea)," *Ŭisahak* 16.2 (2007): 161–76; Park Yun-jae 박윤재, "Singminjisigi hanŭihagŭi yangyak suyonggwa taeŭng 식민지시기 한의학의 양약 수용과 대응 (The Adoption of Western Medicine in Traditional Korean Medicine in Colonial Korea), *Korean Journal of the Social History of Medicine and Health* 6 (2020): 5–25.

[23] Kim Mi-hyun 김미현, "Putkŭrŏhamyŏn k'ŭn pyŏngi saenggimnida 붓그러하면 큰 병이 생깁니다 (Feeling Embarrassed would Cause Severe Diseases)," in *20segi yŏsŏng, chŏnt'onggwa kŭndaeŭi kyoch'aroe sŏda 20 세기 여성, 전통과 근대의 교차로에 서다 (Women in the twentieth century at the Junction of Tradition and Modern)*, ed. by Kuksap'yŏnch'anwiwŏnhoe (Tusandonga, 2007), 252–95; Kim, *Imperatives of Care*, 111–14.

hands, sometimes accompanied by a back pain.[24] However, in some instances, the terms *naeng* and *naengjŭng* were interchangeably used to refer to *taeha* or *taehajŭng*. This meant that *naeng* indicated vaginal discharges.

The series of medical advice on *taehajŭng* demonstrates how Korean physicians rearranged the significance of vaginal discharges as an indicator of women's health in relation to the female reproductive organs. Moreover, it illustrates that the physicians began to define the healthy, normal, or ideal vaginal state using terminology from both traditional and biomedical sources within the framework of biomedical epistemology. For instance, in *the 1929 Chosun Ilbo*, Chŏng Ja-yŏng, the director of the *Chinsŏngdang* clinic, defined *taehajŭng* as an excessive secretion caused by uterine inflammation.[25] In her view, *taehajŭng* is not merely an indicator of matter of uterine dirtiness (*pujŏnghan*) but also a source of all *puinbyŏng*. In other words, she considered excessive vaginal secretion a symptom of a transient and potential threat to women's health.[26] A decade later, Yun T'ae-gwŏn, a physician at Pumin (府民) Hospital, presented a contrasting perspective on vaginal discharge, although it was still related to *puinbyŏng*. In *the 1939 Dong-a Ilbo*, he introduced *taehajŭng* as one of four common symptoms of *puinbyŏng* and elucidated it as follows:

> *Medically*, taehajŭng *indicates secretion from the female genitals, but the secretion also appears physiologically. However, in general, the physiological one is not recognized. On the other hand, pathological discharge is very annoying. (…) Healthy women's discharge is transparent, like glass, and does not flow. They could be categorized: if* taeha *is white, it is called "white* taeha*," if it*

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[24] "Puinegehŭnhiinnŭn naengjŭng koch'inŭn pŏp 부인에게흔히잇는 冷症 고치는 법 (How to Treat Naengjŭng, an Illness Common among Married Women)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 26 January 1934; "Chisangbyŏngwŏn 紙上病院 (A Hospital in a Paper)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 19 November 1934; Cho Hŏn-yŏng 조헌영, "Kyŏŭrŭigajŏngŭihak yŏjaŭinaengjŭngŭn waesaenggina (Sang) 겨을의 [*sic*] 가정의학 여자의냉증은 왜생기나 (上) (Home Medicine in the Winter: The Causes of Women's *Naengjŭng* (1/2))," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 12 January 1935.

[25] Chŏng Ja-yŏng is one of a few female physicians, who graduated from Tokyo Women Medical College in Japan, during the colonial period. Choi Eun-kyung 최은경, "Iljegangjŏmgi chosŏn yŏja ŭisadŭrŭi hwaldong: tok'yoyŏjaŭihakchŏnmunhakkyo chorŏp 4inŭl chungsimŭro 일제강점기 조선 여자 의사들의 활동: 도쿄여자의학전문학교 졸업 4 인을 중심으로 (The Activity of Women Physicians in Colonial Chosun focusing on the Four Graduates from Tokyo Women Medical College)," *Cogito* 80 (2016): 287–316.

[26] Chŏng Ja-yŏng 鄭子英, "Yosaejuŭihalgamgŭiwa yŏrŏgajijagungbyŏng 요새주의할감긔와 [*sic*] 여러가지자궁병 (A Cold and Other Uterine Diseases to Be Aware Of These Days)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 17 September 1929.

> *includes pus and becomes yellow, it is called "yellow* taeha*;" and if it develops into a malignant, bloody type, it is called "red* taeha*." The reasons are genital diseases or other diseases.*[27]

Accordingly, for him, vaginal discharge is more indicative than symptomatic. In addition to Athe aforementioned article written by Kim Suk-whan in 1935, his explanation of healthy women's vaginal secretions seemingly suggests that *taeha* became a term to indicate vaginal discharge, and *taehajŭng* means excessive discharge or pathological discharges.

However, Kim Suk-whan's other medical advice in a newspaper reveals a more nuanced and ambiguous context surrounding the terms, the typical condition of the vagina, and women's practices related to them. In *the 1936 Chosun Ilbo* article on *puinbyŏng* and cleansing practices, Kim Suk-whan employed the term *naeng* and *naengjŭng* in lieu of *taeha* and *taehajŭng*. In his article, the term *naeng* was used to refer to vaginal secretion, while *naengjŭng* was employed to denote excessive secretion caused by certain diseases. He stated that, "while Koreans were not family to bathing habits, married women practiced cleansing their genital [*twinmul*] regardless of their class, mainly to remove *naeng* from their lower part [area]."[28] He postulated that women's efforts to cleanse their genitals were primarily aimed at removing *naeng*, or vaginal discharge, and advanced the argument that the methods of cleansing genitals should be regarded as the causes of *naeng*. As the optimal cleansing agents for the genitals, he proposed, in the ideal case, salt water, a solution of Lysol, tannic acid (*tanningsan*), and lactic acid using a douche. In the absence of not the douche, he recommended a clean washbasin, which is intended for the exclusive cleansing of the genitals, and gauze could be an alternative to the douche. In his explanation, it is unclear from his explanation whether the word *naeng* referred to an unusual or pathological secretion. Nevertheless, his observation suggests that a significant number of Korean women in the colonial era practiced genital cleansing for a variety of reasons, primarily to treat diseases represented by *naengjŭng* and *taehajŭng*.[29]

The three physicians' articles demonstrate that within the medical discourse on vaginal discharge, the ways in which the Korean physicians employed to use the concepts of *taeha, taehajŭng*, *naeng*,

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[27] Yun T'aegwŏn 尹泰權, "Hwanjŏlgiwisaeng(4) cheil manhi koeromŭl pannŭn ilbanjŏkpuinbyŏng <sang> 환절기위생(4) 제일 만히 괴롬을 받는 일반적부인병<上> Between-Season Hygiene: The Most Common and Frequent Puinbyŏng<1/2>)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 23 November 1939.

[28] The Korean term "*twinmul"* means cleansing the back parts of the body, thus indicating the genitalia as well as the anus. The word is still used mainly to refer to cleansing female genitals.

[29] Kim Suk-whan 김석환, "Sech'ŏk chalmot'adaga toeryŏbyŏngŭrŏnnŭnda 세척 잘못하다가 되려병을엇는다 [*sic*] (Faulty Cleansing Habit Would Cause Disease)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 4 March 1936.

and *naengjŭng* were not consistent. However, this inconsistency does not indicate that *taeha* or *naeng* were merely tentative terms that appeared during the transition from traditional medicine to biomedicine. Rather, the terms pertaining to *taeha* and *naeng*, which lacked fixed in meanings, endured as means of communication between patients and medical practitioners. As Sonja Kim notes, "Korean women sought medications and relief from ailments in terms with which they were familiar."[30] Physicians observed women's concerns and proposed treatments to address those concerns using familiar terminology. They continued to utilize these terms even after the liberation, as will be demonstrated in the following sections.

The Interest in the Normal Vaginal State

In 1958, Yi Ok-kyŏng, a female OB/GYN who operated a clinic bearing her name, contributed a medical advice article titled "*Taehajŭng*," which constituted part of her weekly medical column series titled "Medicine for Housewives" in 1957 and 1958. Her articles shared several points with the articles on *taeha* or *naengjŭng* written two decades ago, including the term *taehajŭng*. However, they were written in more medical style. Her sentences, albeit plain, included more medical and anatomical terms vis-à-vis medical advice in the 1930s and despite the title, focused on health, or the *normal* state, rather than pathological aspects. She provided the following explanation of vaginal discharge.

> *Abnormal secretion, rather than blood, is referred to as severe* naeng *or* taeha*. It is not an independent disease, which could be called* naengbyŏng *[naeng disease] or* taehabyŏng [taeha disease]*. It is a symptom of another disease caused by issues with the female genitals or body. (…) Under normal conditions, the mucous [membrane] of the external genital (vulvar) membrane is always wet due to discharge flowing from itself or from the upper organs, such as the uterine cervix or its internal membrane. However, the discharge hardly flows out, and even if it does, the amount is extremely meager. If secretion flows to the extent that it stains and wets underwear, it means that a morbid condition is already occurring in some part.*[31]

In the subsequent article published a week later, Yi presented information regarding various potential causes of "flowing *taeha.*" She elucidated that monilia and *Trichomonas vaginalis*, "a kind of parasites" can precipitate a vaginal infection, which may manifest as pain and severe itching on the

[30] Kim, *Imperatives of Care*, 121.

[31] Yi Ok-kyŏng 이옥경, "Yŏsŏngŭihak(53) taehajŭng① kyŏrhon chŏn yŏsŏngegeinnŭn'gyŏngu 主婦医学(53) 帶下症① 결혼 전 여성에게있는경우 (Medicine for Housewives(53) Taehajŭng① of Women before Marriage)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 19 June 1958.

vulva. Additionally, gonorrhea or gonococcus was identified as a potential cause. Furthermore, she wrote, that "suppurative miscellaneous bacteria [*chapkyun*]" could cause inflammation of the vagina, cervix, or inner membrane.[32] The use of such concrete medical terms suggests a shift in the audience of medical advice for the public—in other words, ordinary women—from the 1930s to the 1950s. The pervasive discourse of women's health and diseases in colonial Korea made some women familiar with such biomedical terms.

The inquiries posed by female readers in women's magazines at that time reflected such a change. In 1955, the magazine *Women's World* (*Yŏsŏnggye*) published an article in which clinician Yi Chong-hŭi responded to ten readers' questions concerning menstruation. In the article, a 28-year-old single woman inquired as to whether the lump in her lower abdomen was a uterine myoma (*chagunggŭnchong*), citing menstrual pain that had persisted for several years and was deemed intolerable.[33]

Another inquiry from a 28-year-old housewife in the same magazine demonstrated that she was accustomed not only conversant with the aforementioned medical terms but also with the products associated with them. The reader, who had contracted syphilis and gonorrhea from her husband, explained that she had used a variety of "antibiotic pharmaceuticals," including penicillin and streptomycin which she referred to as "*maisin*." She expressed the concern that the medications had resulted in a reduction in their efficacy. The "antibiotic injection" procured from a pharmacy proved efficacy solely during the initial stages of treatment. She had been informed that "those who use a great deal of antibiotic medication tend to develop resistance to it." Her state of "depression and anxiety" was transformed into a state of "hysteria" directed toward her husband who had transmitted the diseases to her, which ultimately led to the couple's estrangement, she wrote. She sought guidance from counselor regarding the "specific treatments" for her condition and associated resistance to antibiotic substances, with the hope that this information would "save her from her

[32] Yi Ok-kyŏng 이옥경, "Yŏsŏngŭihak(54) taehajŭng② sŏngsukhan'gihonyŏsŏngŭigyŏngu 主婦**医学**(54) 帶下症② 성숙한기혼여성의경우 (Medicine for Housewives(54) Taehajŭng② of Mature Married Women)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 3 July 1958.

[33] "Wŏlgyŏnge kwanhan komunhaegyŏlssipchang 월경에 관한 고문해결십장 (Solutions to Ten Pieces of Menstrual Concern)," *Yŏsŏnggye*, December 1955, 122–8. As cited in Lee Hwa-hyung 이화형 et al., *Han'gukhyŏndaeyŏsŏngŭi ilssangmunhwa8. kajŏngwisaeng 한국현대여성의 일상문화8. 가정위생 (Korean Modern Women's Culture of Everyday Life 8. Hygiene at Home)* (Kukhakcharyowŏn, 2005), 252–62.

despair."[34] Her illness and "desperation" likely prompted her to seek keenly more detailed information. Nevertheless, her familiarity with medical terminology—the names of diseases, antibiotic substances, infection, resistance, and hysteria—demonstrates that medical concern and intervention using medical products were pervasive in everyday lives during the late 1950s.

In response to the expressed needs of women with medical concerns, physicians proposed standards for self-assessment of their bodily states and recommended treatment options. The aforementioned Yi Ok-kyŏng's column serves as an illustrative example of this response. In the series of articles, she articulated her perspective on vaginal cleansing. While she endorsed women's conventional practices of cleansing their *external genitals* with clean or salty water, in the case of "abnormal discharge," or "severe *taeha*," she advocated for "cleansing the inner vagina" or douching with acidic substances, to prevent the collapse of the inner vagina's "physiological, acidity" (4.5 pH). A shift in the vaginal pH toward a neutral or alkaline state would render the vagina susceptible to infection by "variety of germs" and "parasites," she explained.

> *The most appropriate way to make a solution for douching water [to cleanse the vagina] at home is to add 4 tablespoons of acetic acid or 1 tablespoon of boric acid to 1000 cc of water. It's important to boil the water and let it cool before use. Other options include glycerin and lactic acid, which are acidic [and therefore appropriate]. Salt, iodine, Lugol's solution [aqueous iodine], and sodium bicarbonate are alkaline and are not suitable for [cleansing the inner vagina]. To douche, fill a Ringer's empty bottle with the solution and hang it on the wall so that the water runs down and cleans the vagina. A large basin can be placed underneath to catch the water. If you have difficulty doing so, you can also simply catch the water in a basin and wipe it [the vagina] with a piece of gauze or cotton wool rolled between two fingers.*[35]

Her perspective was one among numerous disparate medical opinions regarding normal vaginal condition and the practice of vaginal douching during in the 1950s. In the 1955 women's magazine *Yŏsŏnggye*, physician Yi Chong-hŭi discussed the topic of "self-purification of the vagina" in a column titled "Single Women and Married Women's Sexual Hygiene." She emphasized the significance of *genital* cleanliness, stating that "[mothers] should instill the practice of genital cleansing as a routine

[34] "Kajŏnggwa hangsaengmuljiryobŏp 가정과 항생물질요법 (Home and a Treatment with Antibiotic Substances)," *Yŏsŏnggye* July 1956, 228–9. As cited in Lee Hwa-hyung et al., *Korean Modern Women's Culture of Everyday Life 8. Hygiene at Home,* 317.

[35] Yi Ok-kyŏng 이옥경, "Yŏsŏngŭihak(55) taehajŭng③ chilssech'ŏkpŏp 主婦医学(55) 帯下症③ 질세척법 (Medicine for Housewives(55) Taehajŭng③ How to Douche)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 10 July 1958.

from an early age. However, she advised leaving the *vagina* to ensure that "the natural purification process" is allowed to continue.

> *The inner [state] of the vagina in healthy married women [*puin*] is strongly acidic due to lactic acid, the result of the decomposition of glycogen on the vaginal wall by Döderlein bacillus. As long as Döderlein bacillus exists, even if a rather toxic pathogen invades, it will be disinfected and cleaned. This is the self-purification of the vagina. Healthy vaginal secretion has the color of condensed milk, including an absolute amount of Döderlein bacillus. If [the vagina] becomes unclean, Döderlein bacillus decreases, which changes the* taeha *to yellow. To enhance this purification process, you should leave it alone as much as possible, not touching it with your hands.*[36]

The two physicians offered differing descriptions of the normal or healthy state of vaginal secretion and recommended disparate methods for attaining it. For Yi Ok-kyŭng, a "normal" wet vagina is one that hardly secretes any vaginal fluid. Therefore, the presence of vaginal discharge is a certain sign of a disease that requires diagnosis or treatment by doctors or vaginal cleansing by women. Conversely, Yi Chong-hŭi proposed the concept of a "healthy vagina" as a habitat for bacteria, wherein the presence of bacteria in secretions maintains the vagina clean through the disinfection of pathogens. Accordingly, she advised that no intervention was necessary. The two physicians provided inconsistent, if not contradictory, recommendations regarding the ideal vaginal state. Nevertheless, they concurred that vaginal discharge is a significant criterion of a healthy or normal vagina, thereby sending a message that women should monitor their vaginal discharge.

Indeed, a medical article written by the physician Kim Suk-hwan in 1960 illustrates that some women began to be aware of vaginal discharge as an indicator of a healthy vagina. The article, entitled "About So-called *Naengjŭng,*" was written as a practical guide for practitioners and included an explanation of *naengjŭng* that was not significantly different from that he provided in the 1930s. However, it also included the veteran OB/GYN's observations of his patients who visited SNU (Seoul National University) Hospital in the 1950s.[37] He noted that *naengjŭng* was the most frequently

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[36] Yi Chong-hŭi 이종희, "Ch'ŏnyŏwa puinŭi sŏngwisaeng 처녀와 부인의 성위생 (Single Women and Married Women's Sexual Hygiene)," *Yŏsŏnggye* June 1955, 195–99. As cited in Lee Hwa-hyung et al., *Korean Modern Women's Culture of Everyday Life 8. Hygiene at Home,* 243–46.

[37] At that time, Kim worked as a professor in the OB/GYN Department of the Medical College at Seoul National University, which is the virtual successor of Keijō Empire University. Seoul National University, "Minjogŭi taehak, kungnipsŏuldaega sŏlliptoegikkaji 민족의 대학, 국립서울대가 설립되기까지 The Way toward the Establishment of Seoul National University for the Nation," 2019 https://www.snu.ac.kr/about/history/history_record?md=v&bbsidx=126614 [accessed, 15 November 2022].

observed symptom identified during gynecological examinations. Some women, particularly those with a modern education, reported feelings of anxiety when they experienced even a slight degree of moisture on their external genitals. This resulted in many of them engaging in frequent cleansing of their genitals or going to see a physician. It is evident that not all Korean women were concerned about their vaginal discharge. He observed the following: "Even when *naengjŭng* is very severe, some women may not be particularly aware of it or feel unwell, and I believe that many women simply think it is a common condition for any woman and just overlook it."[38] His observation, however, indicated that the traditional concern of *taeha* and *naengjŭng* had intertwined with the concept of normal or healthy vaginal conditions as defined in biomedical terms. This entangled idea was circulating among women, albeit among a handful of wealthy women. It also implies what would happen when more women recognized their vaginal discharge, which will be discussed in further detail.

The Vagina: Oscillating Between Physiology and Pathology

In the 1970s, physicians produced knowledge for the public on a range of genital diseases, extending beyond the scope of women's diseases. As discussed in Chapter 4, while women's bodies became a subject of the FPP (national family planning program), the focus was on regulating their fertility rather than promoting their health. Despite the shift in emphasis, the proliferation of newspapers and public magazines in the 1970s enabled women to access a greater quantity of medical advice on women's diseases and health. In this advice, the majority of physicians continued to use the terms *taeha*, *naeng*, and *taehajŭng*, *naengjŭng* to describe vaginal discharge and abnormal vaginal discharge.

By the mid-1970s, while the majority of physicians asserted that *taeha*, *naeng*, or vaginal discharge is not a pathological condition in and of itself, they exhibited disparate views regarding the normal or healthy state of the vagina. A series of medical advice from that period reflected the prevailing discursive situation. In *the 1974 Dong-A Ilbo,* Park Chan-moo, the director of the OB/GYN Department of the National Medical Center, contributed a column entitled "Women's *Naeng* is Physiological." In one of the series of medical advice columns in the newspaper, titled "Medical Essay" and written by several physicians in different disciplines, he wrote that patients commonly complained of "so-called *naeng*," and "the *naeng* called *taehajŭng*" is the secretion from the female genitals. The discharge itself is not pathological. Rather, a deficiency in secretion indicates a malfunction of the ovary, which requires treatment. He further noted that the quantity of *naeng* may increase during pregnancy, prior

[38] Kim Suk-whan 김석환, "Sowi naengjŭnge taehayŏ 所謂 冷症에 對하여 (Modern Conception of so called "Naengeung(Leucorrhea) [*sic*])," *Ch'oesinŭihak* 3.5 (1960): 52–54.

to menstruation, and due to sexual excitement. However, in contrast to women in rural or working-class communities who were less concerned about "abnormal secretions" caused by inflammation or uterine cancer, people from more affluent backgrounds, particularly the intellectual class in urban areas, tended to regard physiological discharge as pathological. This led them to be concerned about it "more than necessary."[39]

In the same year, the monthly booklet *Health* provided medical advice, including a similar opinion that *taeha* or vaginal discharge is a natural phenomenon and does not necessarily indicate disease. In the article, Bae Byung-ju, the director of the OB/GYN Department at Seoul Red Cross Hospital, elucidated the characteristics of *taeha* and "pathological *taeha*" based on the concept of a "self-cleaning vagina."[40] He asserted that the vaginal discharge of a healthy married woman's is sticky and transparent or white in color, akin to milk. In a healthy and clean woman's vagina, the presence of bacteria called the Döderlein bacillus is a determining factor in the characteristics of vaginal discharge and the health of the vagina, and therefore the woman's health. The bacteria result in an acidic environment that is hostile to the survival and proliferation of other bacteria, as well as their migration to the uterus. In the event that the invasion of various bacteria is too heavy or strong for Döderlein bacillus to overcome, it results in a transformation of the vaginal state from acidic to alkaline, thereby impairing the inherent "cleaning function" or leading to the death of white blood cells. This ultimately manifests as pus and yellowish *taeha*. During the summer months, a "distinct acidic odor" may be present due to the decomposition of secretion on the external genitalia. In this regard, he advised against concern over "non-odorous or colorless *taeha,* even if there is rather a lot." However, the issue is that the criteria for a normal vaginal state—transparency, stickiness, smell, and color—are subjective, as Bae Byung-ju himself noted: "It is challenging to quantify normal vaginal discharge, in other words, *taeha*."[41]

In a 1976 medical column in *The Dong-A Ilbo*, Chang Yoon-Seok, a professor in the OB/GYN Department of the Medical College at SNU, also acknowledged the fluidity of the secretion as a

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[39] Park Chan-moo 박찬무, "Ŭihak Esei <53> yŏsŏngŭi naengŭn saengnijŏgida **医学** 에세이 <53> 女性의「냉」은 生理的이다 (Medical Column (53) Women's *Naeng* Is Physiological)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 8 February 1974.

[40] The monthly booklet *Health* (*kŭngang*) was published by the Korea Association of Parasite Eradication (KAPE) in 1973–1976. Targeting a public audience, it provided medical advice about not only parasites but also more general practices in everyday life, such as baths and massages. The booklet was published by the Korea Association of Health Promotion, the predecessor of KAPE, after the KAPE resumed issuing *Health News* (*kŏngang sosik*) after a few years of hiatus.

[41] Bae Byung-ju 배병주, "Taeha irŏl ttaenŭn pyŏngida 帶下이럴 때는 病이다 (Certain *Taeha* indicating diseases)," *Kŏngang,* January 1974, 18–19.

standard to determine a certain disease. His medical column titled "Taehajŭng" which was a part of a series titled "Medicine for the Middle Ages," suggests the obscurity of the secretion as well as its effect on women.

> Taeha *is the term for all vaginal discharge. (…)* Taeha *is commonly called* naeng*. When I examined married women who had complained of excessive* naeng*, I discovered that some of them were normal with no abnormal discharge. Meanwhile, when I noticed a lot of secretion in some married women who came in for other reasons, I asked, "Do you have a lot of* naeng *these days?" They answered, "Not much." As this shows,* taeha *is quite subjective.*

Additionally, he indicated that, as Park Chan-moo observed, a normal menstruation could result in changes in the characteristics of vaginal discharge, or *taeha*. During the ovulation period, the vaginal discharge would increase. A significant number of women reported experiencing "transparent, lumpy mucus (like nasal mucus) that flows during the ovulatory phase (midway between menstrual periods)," and some of them "perceived it as a disease and thus visited the hospital," he wrote.[42]

In essence, the prevailing medical counsel of the 1970s regarded vaginal discharge as a natural bodily phenomenon. Any alteration in its character was therefore interpreted as an indication of illness. However, there was no consensus regarding the indications of pathological process were not consistent. The overarching message conveyed by physicians in their inconsistent advice was that vaginal discharge, *taeha*, or *naeng* per se, may not necessarily indicate the presence of an underlying disease. What, then, is the normal state of the vagina? How might women interpret their vaginal discharge? As physicians observed, some women elected to consult physicians about the state of their vaginas. Visiting a physician offered medical decisions and immediate relief, even though it was expensive and sometimes required hearing physicians' evaluations that they were fastidious or "neurotic."[43]

The experiences of the women whom I interviewed indicate that an increasing number of women began to associate their vaginas with microbes and their overall health, leading them to engage in various cleansing practices for their normal vaginas, even in the absence of any discomfort. Sŏ Jŏng-sun, born in 1952, recalled that she and her sister were taught by their mother to wash their genitals with warm water daily, except during menstruation when "germs could invade." Thus, the daily

[42] Chang Yoon-seok 장윤석, "Chungnyŏnŭi ŭihak (81) taehajŭng 中年의 医学 (81) 帶下症 (Medicine for Middle Age (81) Taehajŭng)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 1 October 1976.

[43] Park Chan-moo 박찬무, "Women's *Naeng* Is Physiological."

routine of the family involved washing the faces, feet, and genitals with warm water and soap at night.[44]

The growing concern about the vaginal state and the subsequent interest in technologies to designed to maintain a healthy or normal vagina facilitated the emergence of the vaginal cleansers market in the mid-1970s. This period also saw rapid economic development in Korea and a shift in consumer habits, with people beginning to purchase products beyond those necessary for survival. However, the significant shifts in attitudes toward women's bodies during the 1960s and 1970s led to the commercial vaginal technologies evolving beyond their initial function as merely cleansers for healthy vaginas. This was due to the implementation of the national family planning program and the subsequent increase in the number of users of contraceptive technologies.

5.2. Versatile Vaginal Technologies

Douches for "a Hygienic and Ideal Sex Life"

In *The 1960 Kyunghyang Shinmun*, Daiyung Trading Company published an advertisement for a douche, or "female spray-type vaginal cleansing device [*yŏsung punmusik chilsech'ukki*]," targeting "especially modern married women." On the left side of the advertisement, a Western female model is depicted. The product name, "Roxy's Ballon Spray Douche," written in large English letters, and its oval-shaped device, which is attached to a nozzle, were presented directly beside the image of the model. The background behind the product name and image were displayed sentences in both English and Korean, which readers could be discerned by readers as belonging to scientific articles. In this manner, the advertisement suggested that the douche would address the scientific concerns of modern women who were knowledgeable about vaginal cleansing. Nevertheless, a sentence in the advertisement implied that the douche was more than just a device for vaginal cleansing: "We recommend this if you want a hygienic and ideal sex life." In doing so, the company promoted its douche as a versatile device for vaginal hygiene and contraception.[45]

The advertisement for the versatile douche reminds us of the contraceptive use of douche and their advertisement in the United States. As Andrea Tone demonstrates, douche and douche solutions were extensively marketed as contraceptives in the United States from the late nineteenth century to the 1950s. Until the oral contraceptive pill rapidly gained popularity among American women, these

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[44] Sŏ Jŏng-sun, interview.

[45] Yŏsung punmusik chilsech'ukki, Daiyung Trading Company, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 4 November 1960.

products were promoted under the term "feminine hygiene," which served as a "euphemism" for over-the-counter female contraceptives. During the Great Depression, despite an increasing number of women seeking contraception, physicians were unwilling to provide them with the requisite knowledge and services, including the provision of pessaries or diaphragms. Furthermore, women were reluctant to seek counsel from gynecologists on this personal matter. In this context, the purpose of contraception, coupled with the desire for "deodorizing bodies" among Americans, led to the growth of the feminine hygiene industry between the 1930s and the 1950s. While influential women's magazines did not publish advertisements for contraceptives, they did not decline advertisements for douches in the name of feminine hygiene. Promoting their products in scientific and medical rhetoric through such women's magazines, the manufacturers circulated the products through a variety of channels, including "five-and-dime stores, mail-order firms, and itinerant peddlers." Despite the potential for reduced efficacy, women chose the douche that allowed for economical contraception without the aid of physicians.[46]

As previously discussed, it was not until the South Korean government declared the national family planning program (hereafter FPP) and lifted the ban on the import of contraceptives in 1961 that contraceptives could be legally imported and promoted in public. In this context, the phrase "for an ideal sex life," which was used to depict the douche in the aforementioned advertisement, can be seen to allude to its contraceptive use. Indeed, as soon as the FPP was announced, physicians explicitly introduced douches as one of the contraceptives in newspapers. In September 1961, *The Chosun Ilbo* published an article, entitled "The Most Fundamental Contraception," authored by OB/GYN Kim Yŏng-gŭn. In the article, Kim enumerated the advantages and disadvantages of ten "temporary contraceptives" and "permanent contraceptives," or surgical sterilization. He introduced douches, or the cleansing method (*sech'ŏkpŏp*) as one of the temporary contraceptives, although he did not fully approve of the method.[47] According to him, the method "hardly fulfills the purpose unless it is conducted promptly after ejaculation."[48]

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[46] Andrea Tone, *Devices and Desires: A History of Contraceptives in America* (Hill and Wang, 2001), 151–82.

[47] Kim Yŏng-gŭn spent ten years working in a laboratory of the OB/GYN Department at Keio University in Tokyo since 1950 he graduated from the medical college at Seoul National University. His knowledge of practical contraceptives might come from the environment in Japan, where family planning has been actively promoted since the late 1940s. "Mirwŏl sari naeoe paksa 密月살이 내외博士 (A Couple of Doctors on Their Honeymoon)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 1961.

[48] Kim Yŏng-gŭn 김영근, "Cheirŭijŏgin p'iimŭl 第一義的인 避姙을 (The Most Fundamental Contraception)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 9 September 1961.

In *The* 1964 *Chosun Ilbo*, the cleansing method was identified as one of the contraceptive methods, alongside condoms, the rhythm method, spermicides, and pessaries. The author of the article, entitled "A Guide to Family Planning," introduced the method as follows.

> *Cleansing method [*sech'ŏkpŏp*] is a French-style method. For this method, it is enough to wash the depth of the vagina shortly after ejaculation with 300 or 500cc of warm water. Waiting more than five minutes after intercourse is too late because sperm has entered the uterus via the cervix. It's better to wash after using contraceptive medicine [spermicides]. Otherwise, you can use a weak acidic liquid such as a boric solution and a device such as a dropper [*sŭp'oit'ŭ*]. However, if the solution is not strong enough, it fails. In addition, long-term use of an acidic solution, even a weak one, can cause vaginal inflammation and thus is not recommended.*

The guide was placed in an adjacent section to an article that presented a discussion on the topic of family planning. This configuration illustrates the accessibility of contraceptives and the position of the douche as a contraceptive at that time. In the article, Kwon E-hyuk and Bang Suk, public health experts involved in the FPP, explained that the Lippes loop was being tested, and that the oral contraceptive pill was expensive to distribute, despite being simple to use. The remarks made by housewife Pak Ki-rye's comment examplify the perspective of those who used douches. Pak, a mother of four children, shared her contraceptive experience. In her view, the spermicide "leads to failure if used at a late stage." However, male contraceptive methods were not viable alternatives for her. Her husband was disinclined to use "safe condoms," which he found "unpleasant," and he declined her recommendation of a vasectomy, stating that he "is delicate, and a good [contraceptive] method will appear soon." Therefore, she opted for a pessary.[49] When men were reluctant to use male contraceptives or decline contraception in general, women tend to choose female contraceptives, sometimes accepting certain demands and requests from the technologies, as Pak's remarks indicate and as illustrated in the previous chapter. It is not difficult to imagine that contraceptive methods that did not request partners' cooperation would be appealing to some Korean women.

It is noteworthy that the douche continued to be used for contraceptive purposes, even after the advent of more effective female contraceptives that did not require male partners' cooperation, became more accessible and were more affordable after the late 1960s. For instance, in 1977, *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* reported one the use of "vaginal cleansing devices" among women in rural areas.

[49] "5wŏrŭn kajokkyehoegŭi tal: almannŭn sikkuro chal salgi wihan chwadamhoe 5 月은 家族計劃의 달: 알맞은 食口로 잘살기위한 座談會 (May Is a Month for Family Planning: A Discussion for Being Well by a Proper Size of Family)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 1 May 1964.

The women were introduced as part of a group of women who had chosen alternative contraceptive methods, namely the rhythm method or coitus interruptus, as opposed to surgical procedures, which required a significant decision-making, or contraceptive devices, which demanded visiting a pharmacy or a health center. The author indicated that the women would fill the "balloon-shaped" device with water in advance and wash out semen completely soon after intercourse.[50] As they were reluctant to undergo surgical contraceptive procedure or reveal their sexual lives by visiting a pharmacy or a health center, the women considered the douche to be an appropriate contraceptive technology.

However, an advertisement for a "cleansing device for the inner vagina [*chilnaesech'ŏkki*]" in 1967 indicates that douche manufacturers shaped the device to be more versatile, reflecting contemporary women's concerns and desires beyond contraception. In the advertisement published in *The Kyunghyang Shinmun,* Yongmin Industrial Company promoted its patented device as "the advanced contraceptive device." As the advertisement for Roxy's douche did, it also mobilized medical authority. Indeed, while the Roxy's advertiser alluded to the scientific involvement, the manufacturer that gave the product the straightforward name, went as far as to cite the names and affiliations of influential physicians, including the OB/GYN Kim Suk-whan, and endorsements from a housewife and an actress. It seems unlikely that the company obtained permission from the individuals in question to use their quotations. However, the names and affiliations of those quoted in the advertisement are accurate and not fictitious. As indicated in the advertisement, the product, which comprised a water tank and tube connected to a nozzle, was crafted from "the most advanced medical synthetic resin." Consequently, the manufacturer advanced the argument that the product was entirely innocuous and facilitated users' avoidance of manual contact with their genitals.

It is noteworthy that the advertisement was published at a specific time. At the time, as a significant number of women ceased using the Lippes loops due to potential adverse effects, the PPFK and the government considered oral contraceptive pills as an alternative to the loop. Even the issue of the side effect of the loop was discussed in the assembly the previous year, as previously mentioned. In this context, the emphasis on "entirely innocuous" was directed toward targeted women who were concerned about the potential adverse effects of the loops.

The manufacturer asserted that the vaginal device would offer two additional other benefits. The contraceptive use was followed by the assertion that the device could "prevent uterine cancer." The third benefit stated that it could "cure *naengjŭng* and *taehajŭng*," which were the very long-standing

[50] "Kisangch'ŏnoe min'ganyobŏp 기상천외 민간요법 (Bizarre Folk Remedies)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 8 August 1977.

concerns among Korean women.[51] The advertisement predicted the emergence of the vaginal product market, in which manufacturers began to fabricate traditional and familiar terminology, concerns about vaginal diseases, the concept of a normal vaginal state, and a new desire for safe contraception.

In the 1970s, a series of advertisements for the more versatile vaginal devices appeared in newspapers and women's and public magazines. In addition to highlighting the contraceptive and therapeutic benefits associated with vaginal discharge, manufacturers of vaginal products began to mobilize the concern about irregular menstruation, which was regarded as one of the two primary symptoms of *puinbyŏng* during the colonial era. By the 1970s the terms *taeha* and *naeng* had been established to indicate (excessive) vaginal discharge, rather than *puinbyŏng* symptoms. Similarly, the term *puinbyŏng* itself underwent analogous changes in its usage. By the late 1960s, the term *puinbyŏng* had already ceased to carry any connotations in traditional medicine, at least in biomedical discourses. The term had become synonymous with gynecological diseases, which could be diagnosed using biomedical terminology such as "inflammation," "myomas," or "cancer" in female reproductive organs.[52] In accordance with this shift, the number of advertisements for medicinal products promising a cure for *puinbyŏng* declined significantly during the 1970s.

Notwithstanding these shifts, concerns pertaining to irregular menstruation persisted, as evidenced by the continued promotion of emmenagogues *(t'ongkyŏngjae,* 通經劑) in various media outlets including newspapers, magazines, and television throughout the 1960s and 1970s.[53] Since 1961, Tongsŏ Pharmaceutical Company had advertised its emmenagogue tablet Oimenjin in

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[51] The recommenders' names and affiliations written in the advertisement are as follows: Kim Suk-whan, the director of the Chungang Hospital Corporation (Cancer Center), Professor Emeritus in the OB/GYN Department at Seoul National University; Lee Su-jong, the president of the Korean Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and head of Wooseuk University Hospital; Hwang Tae-sik, the head of Korea Hospital, the former director of the OB/GYN Department at Severance Hospital; Park Young-ha, the head of Eŭlchi Hospital (the former head of Park Young-ha OB/GYN Clinic); Kim Hye-chung, "popular actress"; Nam Yŭng-hŭi, a house wife. Chilnaesech'ŏkki, Yongmin Industrial Company, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 24 June 1967.

[52] "Han'guk puinbyŏngŭi che2wi nansoam 韓國 婦人病의 第 2 位 卵巢癌 (Ovarian Cancer Is the Second Leading *Puinbyŏng* in Korea)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 23 November 1967; "Ssŏngmobyŏngwŏn kimyŏnggŭn kwajanggwa in'gi paeu yuhana yang taedam puinbyŏng yebang 聖母병원 金英根과장과 人氣 배우 유하나孃 대담 婦人病예방 (The Conversation between Kim Yŏng-gŭn, the Director of St. Mary's Hospital and Popular Actor Miss. Yoo Ha-na: Prevention of *Puinbyŏng*)," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 25 February 1969.

[53] Yi Yong-ju 이용주, "Kwanggo naeyong manhi pakkwŏtchiman chil mihŭp 広告 내용 많이 바꿨지만 質 미흡 (Advertisements: Changed Contents but Continuing Poor Quality)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 18 April 1984.

newspapers and later women's magazines.[54] In 1979, Samch'ŏngdang Inc. published an advertisement for its emmenagogue Sarubia in the magazines *Women Donga* and *Female Students.* The advertisement promoted Sarubia as a treatment for menstrual disorders and irregular menstruation, as well as for a sensation of coldness and tingling in the hands and feet. This promotion continued until the mid-1980s.[55]

An advertisement for a syringe named the "Aren hygiene [*haijen*] set" indicates that manufacturers of syringes also addressed this concern in the early 1970s. The douche was presented as a potential solution to concerns related to irregular or absent menstruation. It is remarkable that the menstrual issue was merely one of the purported advantages of the product. As detailed in the advertisement, the product eliminates "unpleasant feelings after menstruation, bad odor, and *naeng*," prevents "*puinbyŏng*," facilitates "menstruation without trouble," enhances "beauty," and functions as a "simple contraceptive device." In essence, the advertiser positioned the device as a panacea for nearly all reproductive organs in women.[56]

An advertisement for Hygiene Bidet (*Haichen pidae*), in the 1974 *Sunday Seoul* magazine also exemplifies a novel approach to promoting the vaginal technology among businesspeople. By combining existing terminology with new terminology, concerns, desires, and concepts in more intricate rhetoric, the advertisement promoted the vaginal device as a versatile technology. At first glance, the advertisement resembles an article with a bold headline, an abstract illustration, and large text occupying two pages. The pseudo-article begins as follows:

> *Women's charm lies in their neat beauty, which comes from healthy menstruation. Even if you manage and groom your face with a good nourishing cream, irregular menstruation will remove all attractiveness from you. Thus, all women are always concerned about methods to keep their menstruation clean. Here, a device to solve these concerns has appeared: The hygiene bidet. Let me introduce the device, which will not only save women from worrying about* naeng *and* taeha *but also prevent uterine cancer, several menstruation-related diseases, and pregnancy, like killing three or four birds with one stone.*[57]

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[54] Oimenjin jŏng, Tongsŏ Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 4 May 1961; Oimenjin S, Tongsŏ Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Women Donga*, December 1978.

[55] Sarubia, Samch'ŏngdang Inc., advertisement, *Women Donga*, June 1979; *Women Donga*, March 1982; *Women Donga*, July 1983; *Female Students*, May 1984.

[56] Aren Hygiene Set, Aren'gongsa, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 3 July 1972.

[57] Haichaen Pidae, Anjŏn Industrial Corporation, advertisement, *Sunday Seoul*, 26 May 1974.

The introduction integrated the long-standing concern about irregular menstruation, as well as *naeng* and *taeha* as diseases or symptoms of a disease, with the rhetoric of cleanliness and beauty. In the subsequent sections, the manufacturer reinforced the aforementioned connections. “Cleansing the vagina” with its douche, it claimed, could address all of those concerns by increasing vaginal discharge and enhancing the metabolism in the vagina, thus leading to the recovery of regular menstruation. Furthermore, the device was also presented as an effective contraceptive, as “it was originally invented for that purpose” in France.

Indeed, the explanation that an increase in the secretion enhances inherent metabolism and the recovery of regular menstruation is inconsistent with some physicians’ observations that some women were concerned about excessive vaginal discharge to the extent that they sought medical attention. Nevertheless, the explanation was internally consistent and resonated with a more enduring and pervasive concern about irregular menstruation. Furthermore, while the concept of normal vaginal discharge was not clearly defined and novel, preexisting concerns about *naeng* and *taehajŭng*, menstrual disorders, and contraception were concrete and well-established. In addition, the company bolstered the credibility of its explanation by citing to expertise of renowned medical professionals’ names such as David Smithers, the head of the standing committee at the Institute of Cancer Research in the United Kingdom, and Kang Shin-ju, the president of the Korean Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the head of Ehwa Womans University Hospital.

Such versatile douches were also distributed through the networks for the FPP. In 1974, *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* reported that nine manufacturers were accused of selling “quack devices, so-called female cleansing devices across the country.” As documented in the article, the “unlicensed products” were distributed to men undergoing military training for the reserve force or to housewives through door-to-door sales. The devices were promoted as an efficacious treatment for *puinbyŏng* and a contraceptive.[58] Although the FPP was not explicitly referenced in the news brief, a reader’s letter published in the same year in the magazine *Happy Home* indicates that the FPP manufacturers or sellers were pervasive within the network. The reader, who identified himself as an office worker, stated that he had learned about the device from a lecturer who had visited his company and delivered an “enthusiastic lecture on family planning.” At the conclusion of the lecture, the lecturer promoted a device as “the best contraceptive method,” which “has turned out to be a vaginal cleansing device.” The reader asked whether the douche was a reliable and recommendable contraceptive, as the

[58] “Ŏngt’ŏri yŏsŏngyong sech’ŏkki kwadae sŏnjŏn chejoŏp 9kot kobal 엉터리女性用세척기 誇大선전 製造業 9 곳 告發 (Nine Manufacturers Who Hyped Quack Female Cleansing Devices Were Accused),” *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 19 June 1974.

lecturer-cum-promoter had asserted. The magazine editor responded that they did not recommend such a device and warned against individuals who promoted "some highly ineffective devices," even slandering "the best contraceptive methods, namely oral contraceptive pills, loops, and vasectomy."[59]

An article published in a 1976 issue of the magazine *Sunday Seoul* provides evidence that such promoters of the versatile vaginal device using the FPP were a prominent feature of the rapidly expanding vaginal cleansing product market. The article addressed the subject of "petitions pertaining to vaginal cleansing devices." The petitions, which were submitted by three women's associations, asserted that certain manufacturers had engaged in excessive pricing for the devices and that their sales personnel had impersonated FP field workers. Despite the fact that the petitioners' affiliations were proven to be fictitious, albeit similar to existing associations, the content of the petitions and the act of petitioning per se reflected a certain degree of reality. In citing interviews, the author notes that some salespeople introduced "themselves as FP field workers or workers from health centers." Two housewives, Mrs. Kim (34 years old) and Mrs. Yang (29 years old), stated that they had encountered "salespeople who hyped the product as a contraceptive." As the author surmised, competitors may have raised the accusation. At the very least, the article indicates that the douche market was sufficiently lucrative for individuals selling similar vaginal cleansers or relevant products to submit these petitions.

Additionally, the author referenced the assessment provided by OB/GYN specialist Mok Yŏng-ja regarding the efficacy of such devices and her perspective on the ideal or normal vaginal state. This illustrates one of the methods through which medical experts' guidance was intertwined with the vaginal cleansing product market.[60] From Mock' perspective, the device was deemed to have the potential to complement other contraceptive methods, yet it was not an effective contraceptive in itself. The physician did, however, recommend them from the standpoint of health and hygiene (*pogŏnwisaeng*, 保健衛生). As reported by the author, the reasons for this recommendation are as follows:

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[59] "Kajokkyehoek sangdamsil 가족계획 상담실 (Family Planning Counseling Office)," *Happy Home*, July 1974.

[60] Physician Mok Yŏng-ja graduated from Sudo Medical College, the predecessor of the medical college at today's Korean University, in the 1950s. She wrote essays, an OB/GYN guidebook and appeared as a guest on television shows. She also worked as the director of a clinic, the Institute of Infertility Research in the 1970s and 80s. "Sŏjŏk 書籍 (Books)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 28 March 1972; "「Yangnyŏm」yaegi soge 「양념」얘기 속에… (In the Talk about Spices)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 16 December 1972.

> *According to her, with a view to health and hygiene, keeping the vagina clean is significant. Vaginal inflammation,* naengjŭng*, and irregular menstruation can all result from leaving the vagina unclean. In addition, after intercourse, the residue of alkaline semen roughens the acidic inner vagina, which can even lead to uterine cancer. In the past, women used to wash [the vagina] using their fingers. However, it is a hazardous practice that can damage sensitive tissues.*

In this context, the physician advised that vaginal cleansing using a douche is the preferable method to leaving the vagina unclean or cleansing it with fingers. She provided guidance on the precautions and instructions for vaginal cleansing: When performing vaginal cleansing, "ensure that air does not enter into the vagina." Warm water is a preferable option to "certain medications" "particularly in cases without precise knowledge."[61] From the perspective of the readers, the female physician's explanation and concrete instruction would have been perceived as far more reliable than the arguments presented by the imposters and peddlers who claimed the products' contraceptive efficacy. Consequently, the article reinforced the linkage between a clean vagina, diseases such as *naengjŭng*, and vaginal cleansing. At the same time, it conveyed the message that a douche should be used instead of fingers not for contraception but for the cleanliness and health of the vagina.

An essay published in 1974 in the magazine *Happy Home* indicates that some women were using the douche in lieu of manual cleansing. In the essay, entitled "A Miracle by the Cleansing Device [*sech'ŏkki*]," the journalist Chang Eŭl-yong delineated the circumstances surrounding his wife's use of a douche. His wife was a 37-year-old mother of two children, one girl and one boy, who experienced regular menstruation. Notwithstanding the absence of any effort for contraception, she did not conceive. Despite the couple's lack of intention to have the third child, the circumstances led her to contemplate the possibility of a specific disease, prompting a visit to a hospital. The physician diagnosed her as "normal," and her condition was deemed to be "good to be true." Nevertheless, her concerns about her health persisted. The use of a "cleansing device" was ultimately identified as the underlying cause behind her non-pregnant state. His wife stated that "while the conventional way of vaginal cleansing is inconvenient and unhygienic, it [douche] is not. It's convenient to use, store, and carry." Consequently, she used the device for vaginal cleansing in a "bathroom or public bath in the

[61] It is not clear to where the fictional women's organizations sent the petition; possibly health centers or public offices in individual districts in Seoul. "Chilssejŏnggiga mwŏgillae chŏngch'emorŭl chinjŏngsŏ 질세정기가 뭐길래 정체모를 진정서 (What Is the Vaginal Cleansing Device? A Mysterious Petition), *Sunday Seoul*, 13 October 1976.

morning and night, and before and after intercourse." As the cause was disclosed, the couple had enjoyed the contraceptive efficacy of the device, he wrote.[62]

The recollection of Kim Yŏng-suk shed light on the manner in which such devices were promoted and sold in the early 1980s. At that time, she resided in a small city and encountered the vaginal cleansing device when she visited her friend's house in her early twenties, circa 1982. Her friend purchased the "strange white thing," which was likely a Roxy's or Hygiene bidet based on her description, from a peddler who promoted it as a device for single women's management, claiming it would facilitate easier pregnancy and delivery. Despite her interest in using it, Kim did not due to its "high price" point (2,500–3,500 won). Her friend subsequently ceased using it due to its discomfort and difficulty of use.[63]

Contraceptive Interventions and Vaginal Discharges

Chang's wife, Kim, and her friends were among the women who considered cleansing their genitals as a method of vaginal management for various reasons rather than as a contraceptive method. Despite the continued use of douches as a contraceptive method by some women, the late 1970s saw the emergence of a number of accessible and inexpensive alternatives. These included the IUDs, oral contraceptive pills, tubal ligation, M.R. (early abortion), spermicides, and, in cases where husbands were cooperative, condoms and vasectomies. As a result, the popularity of the douche device as a contraceptive method waned. Considering these developments, it is unsurprising that manufacturers in the douche market shifted their promotional focus from a contraceptive device to one designed device for vaginal cleansing. Nevertheless, this does not indicate that the manufacturers ceased to the link the product to contraception. Rather, the increased use of other contraceptive technologies provided them with another opportunity, namely, the possibility of contraceptive intervention on their bodies and resultant bodily changes. For instance, in 1977, *The Dong-A Ilbo* reported that as the FPP "went into orbit," douche peddlers were generating profits. The article indicated that in Kyunggi Province, some of them impersonated the FP field workers, even to the point of wearing white coats. In Chungchung Province, they conducted door-to-door promotions, touting the douche as a device that could prevent post-surgical inflammation by cleansing the vagina.[64]

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[62] Chang Ŭr-yong 장을용, "Sech'ŏkkiŭi kijŏk 세척기의 기적 (A Miracle by the Cleansing Device)," *Happy Home*, April 1974, 31.

[63] Kim Yŏng-suk, interview.

[64] "Kajokkyehoegyowŏn 家族計劃要員 (Family Planning Field Workers)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 6 October 1977.

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, users of contraceptive technologies have experienced a range of bodily changes, major or minor, which are collectively referred to as "side effects" within the terminology of biomedicine. Some side effects, such as bleeding, infection, and uterine perforation, were severe enough to cause women to cease using the contraceptive. Other changes were transient, inconsequential, and non-lethal, allowing women to persevere. One of the less conspicuous changes was an increase in vaginal discharge. This non-life-threatening side effect was not discussed publicly. Such reticence may have been attributed to concerns that highlighting these side effects would appear to contravene the government's strongly pro-natalist population policy. Indeed, *The 1970 Sunday Seoul* reported that the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (MHSA) dismissed the director of the FPP in a county without delay after he expressed his view that the oral contraceptive pill Oiginon was harmful.[65]

Indeed, even contemporary researchers examining the history of contraceptive technology from the perspective of women's reproductive health, have overlooked such results, focusing on severe side effects. This is partly because women themselves considered non-fatal side effects to be inconsequential. As discussed in Chapter 4, however, these contraceptive side effects constitute part of women's bodily experiences, which shaped their everyday lives, as well as their technological choices related to contraception and the technological landscape. Similarly, changes in their vagina, including an increase in vaginal discharge from contraception, shaped women's uses of vaginal technologies and the vaginal product market.

The medical literature on contraceptive technologies, vaginal discharges, and vaginitis, which predominantly present with alterations in characteristics of vaginal discharge, published throughout the 1960s to 80s, enables us to speculate on women's experiences concerning vaginal changes and contraceptive technologies during this period. Such articles included data on excessive vaginal discharge, or *taehajŭng*, caused by contraceptive intervention. Some articles even explicitly focused on the relationship between the two. The data suggests that as more women used IUDs and oral contraceptive pills, more women experienced changes in their vaginas.

Cases of an increase in vaginal discharge associated with the Lippes loop were documented in the mid-1960s and 1970s. In 1966, Seo Kang-gi published the findings of a study comprising the results of investigations on 800 women who attempted the Lippes loop in Hwasung County, Gyeonggi Province. The author, an M.D. and a graduate student at the Graduate School of Public Health at SNU, reported

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[65] "Syok'ing chŏngbo: naryŏgo naega nana 5manŭi "ŭnga~" sori 쇼킹 情報: 나려고 내가 나나 5 萬의 "응아~"소리 (Shocking Information: Who Gives Birth on Purpose? The Cry of 50,000 Baby)," *Sunday Seoul*, 22 March 1970, 12–13.

that 8% of subjects experienced *taehajŭng*, which referred to excessive vaginal discharge although she did not identify *taehajŭng* as the underlying "medical reasons" for women's cessation of the loop use, including bleeding, inflammation, or other reasons.[66] The data indicates that a considerable proportion of women who experienced an increase in vaginal discharge continued to use the loop, accepting the bodily change.[67] In 1977, an article examining the relationship between the Lippes loop and uterine cancer and ovarian function was published. The authors, Kim Yu-tak and his colleague, reported their observation that the increase in the loop's use led to a greater prevalence of side effects, which were predominantly "lower abdominal pain, genital bleeding, and an increase in vaginal discharge."[68]

A study of 200 women who used oral contraceptive pills in 1972 indicates that a considerable number of pill users also experienced an increase in vaginal discharge. In his study, Lee Jin-ho investigated the correlation between oral contraceptive pills and vaginal candidiasis, a condition caused by the yeast fungus *Candida*. He conducted an experiment involving vaginal secretions from the women as a means of investigating the correlation. The initial cohort comprised 200 women who had used Eugynon, which was distributed through the FPP in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The second group, designated as the control group, consisted of 409 women who had visited the family planning clinic at Yonsei University Hospital (Severance Hospital) in 1970. The objective was to ascertain whether oral contraceptive pills induce *Candida* infestation by increasing vaginal acidity, a topic of contention in Western academic circles since the 1960s. In addition to identifying the culture he had incubated, he collected a range of information from the women as potential variables, including the number of pregnancies, income, education level, normal vaginal acidity, and the

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[66] The "other reasons" included vague lower abdominal pain, back pain, and pelvic pain.

[67] Seo Kang-gi 서강지, "Ilbu nongch'onjiyŏgesŏŭi roopp'iimsisure taehan sahoeŭihakchŏk yŏn'gu 一部 農村地域에서의 Loop 避妊施術에 對한 社會醫學的 研究 (A Socio-medical Study on the Intrauterine Device in a Rural Area)," *The Journal of Public Health* 3.2 (1966): 145–52.

[68] The principal objective of the article was to investigate the relationship between the Lippes loop, uterine cancer, ovarian function, and estrogen activity, which particular reference to the karyopyknotic index. The authors gathered the data from 6,696 cases involving 328 loop users and 6,314 non-users, which the department had previously examined between 1975 and 1976. Notwithstanding the aforementioned observation of apparent side effects among those who use the loops, the authors concluded that the presence of the Lippes loops does not exert "any effect either" on uterine cancer, ovarian function, or estrogen activity. Kim Yu-tak 김유탁 et al., "Lippes loop ch'agyongbuinŭi chilssep'ohakchŏk kwanch'al Lippes Loop 착용부인의 질세포학적 관찰 (Vaginal Cytological Studies after Insertion of Lippes Loop)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 20.5 (1977): 317–23.

frequency of *taeha* that individual women recognized. The results indicated a significant correlation between Candida infection and the use of oral contraceptive pills. No meaningful relationship was observed between *taeha* and *Candida* in either group. However, it is noteworthy that 71.5% of the pill users reported *taeha*, compared to 8.8% of the control group.[69]

In an article published in 1977, physician Lee Jinho presented his clinical observation of the vaginal changes that contemporary women experience. The article, based on a study of 400 cases of vaginitis, investigated the correlation between *Trichomonas* and Candida vaginitis. The study's findings indicate that the loop user group exhibited slightly elevated infection rates in comparison to the control group, while the pill user group demonstrated infection rates that were over twice as high. It can be concluded that the observation does not indicate that the use of oral contraceptive pills increases vaginal discharge, given that the vaginal infection did not always cause an increase in secretion. Nevertheless, his observation suggests that at least some pill users experienced alterations in their vagina, prompting them to visit a physician, who diagnosed some of the women with vaginal infection. He also postulated that "it seems that the abuse of antibiotics and distribution of oral contraceptive pills may contribute to a shift in vaginal physiology, creating a condition conducive to the proliferation of *Trichomonas* and Candida vaginitis."[70]

An article on *taehajŭng* in the 1980s indicates a more explicit correlation between the increase in vaginal discharge and the use of contraceptive methods. This was published in 1981 by Lee Jonghen and colleagues in the OB/GYN Department of the Medical College at Chungnam National University. The authors reported that among the 359 women who presented to the university hospital seeking treatment for "*taeha*, itching, or a bad odor," 114 were diagnosed with chronic cervicitis, 230 were diagnosed with vaginitis, and six women were found to have excessive vaginal discharge without any accompanying lesion. The authors identified several underlying causes for the abnormal discharges, including explicit diseases such as vaginitis, cervicitis, uterine cancers, pregnancy, oral contraceptive pills, and the presence of "foreign bodies in the vagina," such as tampons, pessaries, and condoms. As a potential cause of *taeha*, the authors identified the following factors: "the frequent cleansing of the

[69] Lee Jinho 이진호, "Kyŏnggup'iimje eugynont'uyŏ puinesŏŭi chil candidasoge kwanhan yŏn'gu 경구피임제 Eugynon 투여 부인에서의 질 Candida 속에 관한 연구 (A Study on the Vaginal Candidiasis Among Oral Contraceptive (Eugynon) Users)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science*, 15.12 (1972): 647–54.

[70] No Heung-tae 盧興泰, "Chil t'ŭrik'omonasŭ mit k'andidajŭngŭi imsangt'onggyejŏk koch'al 膣 트리코모나스 및 칸디다症의 臨床統計的 考察 (Clinical Study on Trichomonas and Candida Vaginitis)," *Chungnam Medical Journal* 4.2 (1977): 217–26.

vagina by women with an obsession for cleanliness"; "the use of pungent antiseptic solutions" for "vaginal cleansing"; and the use of "contraceptive cream or foam tablets." Furthermore, the authors explicitly refuted the argument that IUDs do not cause *taehajŭng*, stating, "We frequently observed it [excessive *taeha*] caused in clinic."[71]

In another article, published in 1985, the relationship between *taehajŭng* and contraceptives was also addressed. In the article, Kwak In-pyung and Kwak Hyun-mo, of the OB/GYN Department at Yonsei University's Medical College, analyzed the cases of 692 women who visited Kanghwa Hospital in Kanghwa Province to determine their assumption that the use of contraceptives causes *taehajŭng*, particularly barrier methods and surgical methods. The authors concluded that there was not a significant correlation between *taeha* and contraceptive use. However, as they wrote, it was observed that there was a statistically significant prevalence of *Candida* vaginitis in users of barrier contraceptive methods and cervicitis in users of surgical contraceptive methods.[72]

Miraculous Vaginal Cleanser and Sexual Desire

In 1980, *Maeil Business Newspaper* published an advertisement for a vaginal cleansing solution. The advertisement illustrates that manufacturers of vaginal products sought to associate their products with women's recognition of their bodily changes by appealing to married women's sexual pleasure. In the advertisement, Poram Chemicals introduced its cleansing solution, which was named "Sŏnnyŏp'yo Yeppŭni," a phrase that could be translated into English as "the nymph brand's a cutie." In the advertisement, a female model, who appears to be a housewife in traditional Korean dress (*hanbok*), promoted the solution with a "miraculous effect," as if speaking to other wives. Adopting the wife's voice, the advertiser promised that the product would restore "the lost charm."

> *Dear housewives, as I've been busy with household chores, several years or even a decade have flown by since I got married. The lively appearance of my maiden days has vanished somewhere, and, what's more, my most attractive points have faded after giving birth to one or two children. Sometimes, I even worry and feel anxious, thinking that my husband longs for the elastic, youthful charm of my maiden days.*

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[71] Lee Jonghen 이종현 et al., "Paektaehae taehan yŏn'gu 백대하에 대한 연구 (The Study of Leukorrhea), *Chungnam Medical Journal*, 8.2 (1981): 143–47.

[72] Kwak In-Pyung 곽인평 and Kwak Hyung-Mo 곽현모, "Han nongch'onjiyŏk puindŭrŭi taehajŭnge kwanhan imsangŭihakchŏk koch'al 한 농촌지역 부인들의 대하증에 관한 임상의학적 고찰 (A Clinical Study on the Vaginal Discharges in Women Living in Rural Area)," *Obstetrics & Gynecology Science* 28.6 (1985): 849–57.

> *Thus, some enthusiastic housewives even rush to the hospital for* yeppŭini *[cutie] surgery. We are pleased to present to you our miraculous product, developed by our technical team after extensive research. With the KAS, our special mixture, our miraculous product "Sŏnnyŏp'yo Yeppŭni" provides both tightening and hygienic cleansing of your most precious area.*

While the advertisement did mention the product's cleansing effect, its primary focus was on a different purpose: the tightening of the vagina. The manufacturer of the product named it in reference to the *ippŭni* or *yeppŭni* (cutie) surgery, as indicated by the aforementioned phrases. The surgical procedure, which aims to tighten the vagina, appeared on public medica in South Korea in the late 1970s.[73] By invoking the name of the surgical procedure and mentioning its "contracting effect," the company implied that the product would yield comparable results. The company promoted its product through both print media and television. The commercial elicited a negative response from some members of the public. In 1980, Yi Yong, a journalist at *The Kyunghyang Shinmun,* articulated a vehement disapproval of the television advertisement for the "substance for vaginal tightening and cleansing." Yi, who advocated for the prohibition of commercials for menstrual products, asserted that the vaginal-wash commercial would be even more unacceptable. He urged the Broadcasting Ethics Commission to regulate it.[74] Despite such criticism, the company continued to promote the "hygienic" cleanser, claiming that "it would tighten [the vagina], remove various germs and bad odor, and refresh simultaneously" until the following year.[75]

Despite the paucity of materials documenting women's experiences with the novel "miraculous" vaginal cleanser, the advent of its competitors the following year offers a glimpse into a positive response to the solution among some women. In 1981, Yŏngdong Pharmaceuticals began to advertise its product, designated "Inner Rinse." In the English language, the term "rinse" is used to describe the act of rinsing, a liquid used for rinsing, or a solution for dyeing hair. By the early 1980s in South Korea, however, the term was being used to refer to hair conditioner.[76] Accordingly, it seems reasonable to posit that the designation "Inner Rinse" was employed by the company to signify a specialized treatment solution for the internal vaginal region. The company, which identified itself as a "maker in

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[73] Sŏnnyŏp'yo Yeppŭni, Poram Chemicals, advertisement, *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 18 November 1980.

[74] Yi Yong 李傭, "Chŏlch'anbadŭn「80 MBC taehakkayoje」ch'amsinhan mŏt wŏnsukhan sŏngjang 絶讚받은「80 MBC 大學가요제」참신한 멋 圓熟한 成長 (MBC Pop Music Contest for College Students: New Look and Maturity)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 14 November 1980.

[75] Sŏnnyŏp'yo Yeppŭni, Poram Chemicals, advertisement, *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 1 April 1981.

[76] I will deal with the change in use of the term "rinse" and the personal hygiene product market in South Korea in following section in detail.

the specialty of diagnostic reagents," advertised its "non-acidic feminine vaginal cleanser." Although the description provided was too vague for the general public to comprehend the benefit of vaginal tightening, it was sufficiently similar for those familiar with the Yeppŭni to recall the "miraculous effect": "Inner-Rinse will help you maintain your most precious part more miraculous and beautiful, providing more attractive cleanliness and pleasant happiness."[77]

In July of the same year, Chŏngsan Business (*silŏp*) entered the market with the introduction of a product named *Syamsŭ, which was described as* a "female cosmetic and hygiene wash." The company guaranteed that it would eliminate *naeng* and *taeha*, itching, and "various germs" and provide a "thrill that only those who have already used Syamsŭ know." The implication of vaginal contraction was somewhat ambiguous. However, in another advertisement in August, the company made an explicit reference to the function, arguing that the "hygienic cleanser for contraction and beauty treatment" was a "secret to restore women's attraction."[78]

In August of that year, unfortunately, the two vaginal cleansers, Yeppŭni and Inner Rinse, were the subject of news reports on criminal activity rather than advertisements. In addition to the seven manufacturers of "vaginal cleansers," the representatives of the two companies were accused of manufacturing "feminine cleansers" with "highly toxic chemical ingredients." According to the prosecution, following reports from some users of such cleansers of a sense of stinging and engorgement, an inspection was launched, which revealed that the suspects sold vaginal cleansers made of resorcinol or selenium disulfide through door-to-door salespeople.[79]

The anecdote of the douche solutions seems to be a fuss that was prompted by unusual, toxic vaginal cleanser that claimed to have the strange ability to tighten the vagina. However, it was aligned with the contemporary vaginal cleansing devices that had promised versatile benefits including cleanliness and beauty by restoring or recovering the previous vaginal state which emerged in the 1970s. Both mobilized the preexisting concern about normal, healthy, or clean vaginas and combined it with new desires. If douche manufacturers had recognized and appealed to women's emerging desire for contraception, now female vaginal cleanser manufacturers discovered the new desire discovered for sexual pleasure, particularly among married women.

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[77] Inner-Rinse, Yŏngdong Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 2 March 1981.

[78] Syamsŭ, Chŏngsan Business, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 8 June 1981; *Dong-A Ilbo*, 22 August 1981.

[79] "Tokkŭngmullo yŏsŏngyong sech'ŏkche 6myŏng kusok set subae 毒劇物로 여성용 세척제 6 명 拘束 셋 手配 (Six People under Arrest and Three Wanted on Accusations of Manufacturing Feminine Cleansers with Toxic Substances)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 14 August 1981.

From the mid-1970s onwards, the sexual desire of married women, or what Korean sociologist Eun-joo Cho refers to as "hedonistic sexuality," was documented in magazines and newspapers.[80] It is important to note that discourse on sex was not a novel phenomenon. As Theodore Jun Yoo illustrates, in the 1920s, colonial Korea witnessed an "explosion of discourse on sex" in advertisements for erotic novels, medical and scientific knowledge, sexology, and sex columns in newspapers and magazines.[81] In the post-liberation period of the 1950s, a few women's magazines, such as *Yŏwon* conveyed advice from Western experts on the sexual lives of married couples, and a few tabloids published erotic images of Western actresses. In the context of the authoritarian government that prevailed during the 1960s, tabloids disseminated a greater quantity of erotic or even pornographic imagery and descriptions, with a particular emphasis on descriptions of deviant sex practices, including those engaged in by sex workers or involving infidelity.[82]

The 1970s marked a notable shift in the discourse surrounding sexuality, facilitating a greater degree of openness among married women in expressing their sexual desires. While tabloids and cinemas continued to disseminate images of illicit sexual activity, public health experts involved in the FPP began to engage with the production and circulation of sexual discourse, focusing on sexuality within the context of married couples. In collaboration with physicians and sociologists, they produced sexual knowledge that, on occasion, included information that could be perceived as indecent. This information was disseminated extensively through the FPP's promotional materials, the work of FP field workers, and FP Mothers' Clubs, as well as in newspapers, magazines, and books, to the extent that some individuals frequently expressed disapproval. Such endeavors constituted an integral component of the program, representing a "modernization" project. At the level of everyday life, the project aimed to transform each woman into a modern housewife in a family founded upon romanticized love. Consequently, within the family unit, sexual intercourse was no longer regarded as a solely reproductive action. Instead, it was reframed as a "practice of love" between a couple within a normal family bound by "marriage."[83] Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, although the union should

[80] Cho Eun-joo 조은주, "6chang. kŭndae kajok mandŭlgi 근대가족 만들기 (Ch.6. Making Modern Family), in *Kajokkwa tongchi 가족과 통치 (Family and Governance)* (Changbi, 2018), [Aladin E-Book].

[81] Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea*, 163.

[82] Kim Chi-young 김지영, "Kyŏnggye pakkŭi 'sŏng'kwa chisik kwŏllyŏgŭi hwakchang: 1960nyŏndae hwangsaek chŏnŏrŭi seksyuŏllit'i tamnon yŏn 경계 밖의 '성'과 지식 권력의 확장: 1960 년대 황색 저널의 섹슈얼리티 담론 연구 (Sexuality over the Boundaries and Extension of Modern Knowledge Power : A Study on the Discourse of Sexuality in the Korean Yellow Journal of the 1960s)," *Yŏsŏngmunhagyŏn'gu*, 45 (2018): 432–79.

[83] Cho Eun-joo, "Making Modern Family."

be discussed within marriage and not all people welcomed the change, contraception and sexual pleasure between married couples became inextricably linked and fell out of the taboo category.

A series of newspaper articles in *The Kyunghyang Shinmun,* entitled "A New Genre Painting of Rural Areas," published throughout 1977 and 1978, demonstrates that the discourses of sex that allowed and encouraged married women to reveal and pursue their sexual desires began to permeate ordinary women's lives. Concurrently, the articles illustrate how these discourses shaped the ways that married women thought about the vagina as an organ through which they felt sexual pleasure and self-satisfaction, thereby leading them to become involved in vaginal technologies. In one of the articles, a news item was reported that in Kyungsang Province, a village, the villagers shared a method of using condoms that "would make the night work [sexual intercourse] more pleasurable." The knowledge that "the use of two condoms simultaneously and properly" produces a "far different feeling" became prevalent in the village. In the same article, a woman was reluctant to visit a health center for free condoms, so she borrowed condoms from her neighbor and reused them after washing them. This indicates that the shame associated with the intimate topic had largely dissipated and that sexual discourses were common and open enough for people to share sexual (tacit) knowledge and technologies among their neighbors in rural areas.[84]

Another newspaper article, entitled "Bold, Progressive Mood," in the same series presented the case of some women who sought sexual pleasure in more audacious ways. In this article, a bride appeared. While her mother-in-law proceeded to unpack each item of the bride's marriage wardrobe and display them in their backyard, a customary practice in the village, she opened a tin containing a collection of "rubber products [condoms]." The situation caused a degree of embarrassment, which resulted in the attendees dispersing. The mother-in-law then made a remark, stating, "What an unusually weak thimble!" in a loud voice. What renders the anecdote intriguing is the bride's response to the unfolding events. On that night, when the new husband accused the bride of "disgracing" his mother by "bringing even such things," she replied without hesitation: "The things distributed by health centers are of poor quality, so I brought good ones in advance."

The article then proceeded to report that "so-called *ippŭni* surgery" had gained popularity among women in rural areas. "Women who have finished their childbirth due to family planning" got the operation "to restore the part that will not bear more children as it was."

[84] "Hwajeppurin p'iimyak 話題 뿌린 피임약 (The Contraceptive Pill That Became an Issue)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 2 August 1977.

*Last June, Mrs. Sŏ (38 years old) visited a clinic in a health center for the [Lippes] loop in Daehoji Village, Dangjin County, Chungcheong Province. She wanted to know if she could get "*ippŭni *surgery" before her loop insertion. After examining her body, the clinic staff decided she didn't need it. However, she adamantly declined such advice, "I should get it. So far, I have gone through a lot, so I've decided to do all good things in the future. If you're not going to do it, I'll get it done at the hospital in town." She then went to town. About five women a month come to the health center in Susan County to inquire about the* ippŭni *surgery, just like Mrs. Sŏ did. They ask about the cost and the procedure, and then go to a hospital. The director of a clinic says the surgery costs 25,000–30,000 won, which is affordable for women, given the rise in income in rural areas. So, we can expect an increase in the number of people wanting the* ippŭni *surgery.*[85]

The article addresses the point at which new desires among women for sexual pleasure or satisfaction and the pursuit of such through vaginal technology collided with the recognition by physicians of these desires. Mrs. Sŏ and other women, in conjunction with the physician/director of a clinic, demonstrate a shift in the medical market in South Korea that occurred in the late 1970s. As American physicians in the evolving medical market began to explore opportunities in the cosmetic surgery business in the 1980s and 1990s and later female genital plastic surgery in the late 1990s, South Korean physicians faced a similar but earlier competitive environment in the market and thus turned their attention to vaginal plastic surgery.[86] As previously discussed in Chapter 4, the introduction of National Health Insurance, which established scheduled fees for each medical treatment and provided insurance coverage, in the 1970s, exerted significant pressure on the majority of Korean physicians.[87]

The 1979 *Kyunghyang Shinmun* article illustrates the transformation of the Korean medical market and the subsequent rise in popularity of plastic surgery. The article noted that plastic surgeons were almost "free from the health insurance suffocating other physicians, as physicians themselves describe." In this context, the surgeons noticed a significant prevalence of vaginal plastic surgery among married women. Ham Ki-sun, the director of the Plastic Surgery Department at St. Mary's Hospital, offered the following commentary on the recent surge in popularity of *plastic* surgery among middle-aged women as follows: "While in the past, young people accounted for most patients, it

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[85] "Taedamhan kaebang p'ungjo 대담한 開放 풍조 (Bold, Progressive Mood)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 11 August 1977.

[86] Tiefer, "Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery," 467–68.

[87] Cho Byong-hee 조병희, *Han'guk ŭisaŭi wigiwa saengjon chŏllyak 한국 의사의 위기와 생존 전략 (Crisis and Survival Strategies of Korean Doctors)* (Myŏnggyŏng, 1994), 152; Park Yun-jae 박윤재, *Han'gukhyŏndaeŭiryosa 한국현대의료사 (The History of Medicine in Contemporary Korea)* (Tŭllyŏk, 2021), 138, 187.

appears that more middle-aged women are visiting.” He also observed that middle-aged women were likely to undergo “mammoplasty, rhytidectomy [facelift], and *yeppŭni* [*ippŭni*, cutie] surgery.”[88]

Some sources suggest that the popularity of *yeppŭni* surgery has a more compelling background than previously assumed, namely that it is not solely a cosmetic procedure. In 1979, *The Dong-A Ilbo* published an article reporting the growing popularity of plastic surgery. In the article, Mrs. Pak was introduced one of the women enthusiastic about “extravagant cosmetic surgeries.” Mrs. Pak, a resident of Seoul, had undergone a procedure “known as ippŭni surgery” at a small OB/GYN clinic.[89] This leads us to consider the relationship between women’s experiences of childbirth and *ippŭni* surgery. In general, the procedure has been regarded as a *cosmetic* tightening operation, which has led to the surgery being subjected to criticism, as the aforementioned newspaper article implied. Accordingly, physicians were reluctant to provide detailed experiences with the procedure, which made it challenging to ascertain the context in which the surgery was conducted. One of the OB/GYNs’ recollections, however, indicates that not all *ippŭni* surgeries were solely cosmetic procedures. With regard to his experience with *ippŭni* surgery, Song Sang-hwan, who served as a professor in the OB/GYN Department of the Medical College at Yonsei University and Hanyang University throughout the 1960s and 1970s, offered the following recollection of his vaginal surgery operations in those university hospitals:

> *In the past, people would deliver at home, not in an institution, so they did not get an episiotomy. So, it would lead to uterus prolapse, fecal incontinence, and difficulty in sexual relationships. The anus and vagina could be chapped, and the anal sphincters could do so. In those cases, I used to perform so-called vaginal plastic surgery.*[90]

In that, while *ippŭni* surgery was conducted by cosmetic surgeons and OB/GYNs for profit, the purposes of the surgery included not only the improvement of women’s beauty but also the enhancement or recovery of their bodily functions. The decision to undergo the surgery was based on the individual women’s experiences during and following childbirth and their interpretations thereof. This provides an alternative perspective on understanding the experiences of Mrs. Sŏ and other

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[88] “Sesang irŏssŭmnida ich’angŭl t’onghaebon chigŏbinŭi silssang <65> ŭisa (13) sŏnghyŏngoegwaŭi 世相 이렇습니다 裏窓을 통해본 職業人의 実像 <65> 醫師 (13) 成形外科 (The Ways of the World: Knowing the Reality of Occupation through an Inner Window (65) Physician (13) Plastic Surgeon),” *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 7 February 1979.

[89] “Sach’isŏng sŏnghyŏng pum pae churŭmsal p’yŏnŭnde 300manwŏn 사치성成形 붐 배 주름살 펴는데 300 萬원 (A Boom of Extravagant Plastic Surgery: 3,000,000won for Removing the Creases on the Belly),” *Dong-A Ilbo*, 23 March 1979.

[90] *Childbirth and Women’s Health*, ed. by Han Keung-Hee and Yoon Duk-young, 258.

women who sought *ippŭni* surgery, particularly, in rural areas. It is reasonable to assume that Mrs. Sŏ, 38-year-old woman, residing in a rural area has experienced the majority of her deliveries in a domestic setting. Considering that the staff at the public health center deemed the procedure unnecessary, it is likely that the changes to her vagina following her deliveries are relatively minor from a medical standpoint. However, from the perspective of Mrs. Sŏ, who had experienced changes in her own body, the surgery was a necessary and one of the "good" ones that she deserved. This illustrates that women's uses of vaginal technology were not solely influenced by sociocultural shifts but also by their individual interpretations of their bodies, in which their experiences, desires, and senses were inscribed.

This reconsideration of *ippŭni* surgery allows us to perceive these vaginal douches, which were promoted as a solution with vaginal tightening, as more than mere vaginal cleansing agents. From the perspective of contemporary women, the douche solutions were regarded as a form of vaginal technology that could enhance their sexual pleasure and satisfaction. The cost of the vaginal cleanser Sŏnnyŏp'yo Yeppŭni was 3,500 won. Given that Pacific Chemical's Lido Shampoo was priced at 1,650 won, these douches were not inexpensive for a hygiene product.[91] However, when considered alongside *ippŭni* surgery, it can be surmised that they were viewed as a relatively modest investment by women.[92] It seems reasonable to assume that women purchased and used the douche solution with some degree of reservations, anticipating at the minimum a hygienic benefit from the cleanser with which they were already familiar. Indeed, although some manufacturers of the vaginal cleanser promising vaginal tightening were arrested, some companies then survived and promoted their products that purported the same contractive effect.[93] The vaginal surgery and the vaginal cleansers that promised restoration of their vaginas to the condition they had been in before their deliveries illustrate that married Korean women began to reveal their sexual desires and pursued them by involving themselves in vaginal technologies.

It is also important to note that this does not indicate that such women were liberated from the traditional ideas about women's sexuality. As Virginia Braun argues, similar to other female genital plastic surgeries, vaginal tightening surgery is inherently bound to heterosexual norms. She notes that the underlying assumption behind the surgery is that sexual pleasure is equated with orgasm through

[91] Lido Shampoo, Pacific Chemical, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 11 December 1980.

[92] Lido Shampoo, Pacific Chemical, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 11 December 1980.

[93] Syamsŭ, Chŏngsan Business, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 11 October 1982.

coitus and that a tight vagina is more suitable for heterosexual penetrative coitus.[94] From this perspective, Mrs. Sŏ and other married women who underwent or sought *ippŭni* procedure could be regarded as epitomes of women who adhered to heterosexual norms. They exemplified wives who practiced family planning, a national project and familial endeavor, and who sought sexual pleasure with or for their husbands. The 1980 advertisement for the Yeppŭi solution could be regarded as an illustration of the manner in which these vaginal technologies reflected and reinforced heterosexual norms.

The advertisement simultaneously appealed to married women's sexual desire and their corporeal experiences, including deliveries, using the voice of a married woman, albeit fictional. While cosmetic genital surgery is a technology that allows some Western women to achieve the ideal vagina presented in pornography and sex education books, *ippuni* surgery in South Korea was a technology that allowed married women to recover their bodies to the state they remembered, and these "miraculous" vaginal solutions promised the same effect. By the mid-1980s, the majority of these products had been removed from the market. However, the strategies employed by vaginal product manufacturers to appeal to sexual desire, women's bodily experiences and the senses of married couples behind these solutions would appear in altered forms, as will be demonstrated.

5.3. Feminine Washes for All Women's Clean Vaginas

A Feminine Cleanser for "Mothers as well as Daughters"

In April 1982, Hyundai Pharmaceutical Company advertised Gynobetadine (*chinobet'adin*), a povidone-iodine solution widely used as an antiseptic, as indicated by the product name. The advertisement indicates that the pharmaceutical company observed a growing number of women experiencing vaginal changes for a variety of reasons and expressing concern about them. In response, the company addressed these biological changes and concerns. In the advertisement, the company made four specific product claims: the ability to wash "dirty menstrual substance," to cleanse "dirty secretion," to "prevent *naeng* or *taeha*," and to maintain cleanliness in "the unhygienic public bath." The terms *naeng, taeha,* and "hygienic" are reminiscent of those used in douche advertisements during the 1970s. However, in contrast to the previous advertisements that alluded to the prevalent linkage between vaginal cleansing and *naeng* or *taeha*, the 1982 advertisement articulated this relationship in a concise and explicit manner.

[94] Braun, "Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery," 418.

> *Prevention of* naeng*,* taeha*:* naeng *or* taeha *is a symptom caused by the invasion of several* ***pathogens****. Gynobetadine has a strong and broad sterilizing effect, disinfecting the pathogens that cause* ***vaginitis****, preventing* naeng *or* taeha*, and maintaining cleanliness. [emphasis mine]*[95]

The pharmaceutical company's emphasis on pathogens and vaginitis resonates with the reality that a great number of women experienced changes in vaginal secretions during the early 1980s. As previously discussed in the medical literature indicates that an increasing number of women were using contraceptive technologies, thereby experiencing notable vaginal changes. These changes included the development of vaginitis and an increase in vaginal discharge, or *taeha*.

A 1981 newspaper article indicates that a considerable number of women sought medical attention at hospitals for vaginal discharge. In *The Dong-A Ilbo* article, the author stated that "most Korean women suffered from *naengjŭng*," referencing a study conducted on 23,000 outpatients who visited the National Medical Center in 1980 by physicians led by Pak In-sŏ, the director of the OB/GYN Department. As stated by the author, the study revealed that 85% of the patients were diagnosed with *naengjŭng*, which referred to abnormal vaginal discharge, and that the *naengjŭng* was found to be caused by inflammation or cancer in the cervical canal, endometrium, Fallopian tube, or vagina. The primary vaginal diseases were nonspecific vaginitis, which was caused by various types of germs. After delineating the symptoms and etiology of various types of vaginitis, the author remarked that *naeng* presented an early symptom of several *puinbyŏng;* in other words, gynecological diseases. Consequently, the author advised that medical checkups and treatments be pursued if a change in vaginal discharge is observed.[96] In light of these circumstances prevailing in the early 1980s, the company made a promise in its advertisement that its Gynobetadine would address the concerns of women regarding their vaginal diseases and secretions. The advertisement insisted that the product was as a means of preventing infection, thereby obviating the need for hospital visits.

It is noteworthy that Gynobetadine and certain vaginal cleansers were promoted as treatments for *naengjŭng* in the late 1970s. Documents from the MHSA (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs) indicate that in 1978, Hyundai Pharmaceutical Company received approval to manufacture Betadine Vaginal Suppository (*pet'adin jiljwayak*), primarily composed of povidone-iodine, as a treatment for

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[95] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 10 April 1982.

[96] "Kamyŏmdoegi swiun puinbyŏng 感染되기 쉬운 婦人病 (A Commonly Infectious *Puinbyŏng*)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 25 May 1981.

and protection from various types of vaginitis.[97] In the same year, Dong-a Pharmaceuticals was granted a license to manufacture Lactacyd (*rakt'asidŭ*). The MHSA approved the product, whose primary ingredient was lactic acid and "lactoserum," as a general "medicine for skin ailments [*p'ibujirhwanyongje*]," including acne, eczema, pruritus, mycotic dermatoses, *taehajŭng*, *naengjŭng* and vaginal acidification (*chil sansŏnghwa*).[98] Such products were procured by women from pharmacies based on recommendations provided by pharmacists. In the late 1970s, Yi Su-yŏn purchased a vaginal cleanser to treat her "continually flowing *naeng*" on the advice of a pharmacist, who had served as her reliable counselor regarding matters related to her body. She used the cleanser, the specific name of which she could not recall, for a period of time but ultimately discontinued its use after determining that it was ineffective in addressing her case.[99]

In contrast, the 1982 advertisement for Gynobetadine emphasized the prevention of *naeng* and *taeha*, rather than on their treatment. In other words, the pharmaceutical company attempted to transform the product from a therapeutic medicine used solely during illness to a preventive, hygienic product used in daily life. In this manner, the company was able to extend its appeal to a broader range of women, not merely those experiencing *naeng, taeha*, or vaginal discharge, but also those with a heightened concern about vaginal infection. Throughout the 1980s, the company repeatedly asserted that the product was "medicine approved by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs," a category distinct from non-pharmaceutical drugs that had a minor or non-direct effect on the human body and were not instruments or machines.[100] In addition to the medical approval, the company highlighted the product's distinctive red-violet hue, which was attributed to the iodine ingredient. This color was reminiscent of the renowned iodine tincture, *oktochŏn'gi* (沃度丁幾). From the colonial

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[97] Minister of Health and Social Affairs, "A Manufacturing Approval of Betadine Suppository (Pet'adinjiljwayak) as Medicine" in Files of "Manufacturing Approvals of Hyundae Inc. vol3. 1968–1998," 1978, National Archives of Korea, Reference No. DA0250331.

[98] The formula of Lactacyd was derived from the same product (Lactacyd pH3.5 Liquide) manufactured by Laboratories Porcher-Lavril in France. Minister of Health and Social Affairs, Bureau of Medicine Affairs, Division of Medical Affairs, "An Application of Lactacyd (Rakt'asidŭ) for Manufacturing of Medicine, Quasi-medicine, Cosmetics, Medical Equipment, Hygienic Product" in Files of "Medicine Approvals," 1978, National Archives of Korea, Reference No.BA01273262.

[99] Yi Su-yŏn, interview.

[100] In the Pharmaceutical Affairs Act, the category of "medicines, non-pharmaceutical drugs, cosmetics, medical appliances, and the sanitary supplies" was stipulated since 1964 and wholly amended to "medicines, non-pharmaceutical drugs, medical appliances" in 1999. Pharmaceutical Affairs Act, Amended 13 December 1963, and Enforced 14 February 1964, Korean Law Information Center https://www.law.go.kr/법령/약사법/(01491,19631213) [accessed, 21 November 2022].

period until the 1980s, the antiseptic was widely used in Korea. Indeed, all the women whom I interviewed in 2021 mentioned its characteristic color.

A further distinction between this advertisement and those that had preceded it was that it was targeted at a new user group: female adolescents. In the advertisement, a female adolescent with wet hair draped a towel over her upper body in a manner suggestive of having completed her showering routine. The advertisement then proceeded to state, in large, bold font, "Dear fathers, mothers, and daughters, we are pleased to announce what Gynobetadine is…" and then provided the answer below: "The essential feminine cleanser for mothers and daughters."[101] The image and accompanying text indicate that the company's potential new consumer group was a nuclear family headed by a loving father who cares for his wife and daughter, a beloved mother, and a daughter. This portrayal aligned with the ideal and normative structure promoted by the FPP. In the subsequent year, the advertisements for Gynobetadine featured a more mature, though still youthful, adult woman wearing a long-sleeved blouse in its advertisements published in three different major newspapers. Given the aforementioned aversions to advertisements for menstrual products and vaginal cleansing solutions, it was likely that the previous advertisement last year, which mentioned technology reminiscent of female corporeal bodies would provoke some conservative readers and contribute to the change in the model.

Nevertheless, this did not signify a cessation of the company's effort to cultivate interest among female adolescents as prospective consumers. In the same year, the company released an advertisement for Gynobetadine in the magazine *Female Students*, with the explicit intention of targeting adolescent girls. In the advertisement, which occupied two pages in the November issue of the magazine, the same model, clad in the long-sleeved blouse, was positioned on the left side of the page. Two young models, attired in blue jeans, stood beside the adult model. They were pointing their fingers straight ahead, as if they were addressing the readers, who were of a similar age to themselves. Instead of focusing on vaginal illness, the advertisement stated as follows. "During menstruation, when the vaginal mucous membrane becomes thinner, the good sterilization ability [of Gynobetadine] will prevent infection and relieve itching" and result in "safety and freshness."[102]

This reference to the condition of the vagina during menstruation resonated with the prevailing concept of the vulnerable vagina during menstruation. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, the magazine itself contributed to the proliferation of the concept, although it did not explicitly endorse

[101] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 10 April 1982.

[102] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Female Students*, November 1983.

the use of the product directly. Concurrently, the magazine disseminated the concept of the normal vagina, which had been a familiar idea to married women but not to adolescents at that time. In January of the same year, the magazine published an article on sex education, entitled "Sex Class for Female Students/Women′s Inner Structure," which addressed the topics of physical changes in puberty, genital anatomy, and provided a brief guide for "preventing infection" concerning "genitals." The author recommended washing "frequently the labia minora and majora and the anus but never using strong soap or others' towels." However, the author advised against the use of douche for the purpose of thoroughly cleansing the vagina, citing that the vagina's self-cleaning function whereby vaginal discharge maintains the vagina's cleanliness. Moreover, the author recommended that "those who use deodorant on the smelly labia majora" should instead wash the genitals with clean water, as deodorant use can potentially lead to infection and the development of more serious diseases.[103] In this manner, the guidance conveyed a message that women should maintain cleanliness of their genitals, which are self-cleaning but susceptible, through the use of products that do not soap, thereby preventing the intrusion of germs.

It is noteworthy that the mention of deodorant indicates that the article was initially not written for a Korean audience, as deodorant was not a common practice among Koreans until the late 1990s. In addition to the mention of deodorant, certain elements of the article suggest that the article may have been a translation of American sex education.[104] However, these elements were likely trivial for the magazine's young readers. The contents of the article, including detailed illustrations of women's genital anatomy, must have drawn the attention of the female student readers who had not previously seen such explicit images of their bodies.

Furthermore, the company underlined that the product "is more necessary for blue jeans wearers" in a bold font.[105] Indeed, the mention of fashion already appeared in the aforementioned three advertisements featuring the adult model in 1983 as follows: "Do not forget [to use Gynobetadine],

[103] "Yŏhaksaeng sŏngkyosil/ yŏjaŭi naebugujo: kamch'uŏjin mom, yŏjaŭi sinbi 여학생 성(性)교실/여자의 내부구조: 감추어진 몸, 여자의 신비 (Sex Class for Female Students/Women's Inner Structure: The Hidden Body, The Mystery of Women)," *Female Students*, January 1983, 226–29.

[104] The article included a remark on the recent "self-help [*selp'ŭhelp'ŭ*]" movement written as it sounds in English, which was hardly used that way in South Korea but popular in America.

[105] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Female Students*, November 1983.

especially when you wear tight jeans or underwear made of synthetic fibers."[106] In the advertisement for female students, however, along with the vulnerable vagina during menstruation, the rhetoric of jeans consisted of one of two main pillars.

The reference to blue jeans among adolescents in the advertisement coincided with a shift in which middle- and high school students were permitted to wear non-uniform attire as a result of the liberalization of the dress code by the Chun Doo-hwan government in 1982. Prior to the relaxation of the code, nearly all Korean middle and high school students had worn identical uniforms, shoes, and hairstyles since the 1930s. Consequently, by 1981, every male secondary school student was attired in a Japanese-style black uniform with a standing collar (*gakuran*) and a buzz cut, while the female counterpart was clad in black or navy uniforms with a wide collar and bobbed hair. These ensembles signified that the wearers were students who required supervision by the authorities.

The liberation was one of the measures implemented by the Chun government prior to two significant international events: the 1986 Seoul Asian Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympics. As South Korea was selected to host these two international events, the government, which was established following the second military coup in 1979 and the violent suppression of the May 18 Democratic Uprising in 1980, was concerned about how Koreans would be perceived by the international community. The massed students, seemingly identical in appearance, would serve as an exemplar of the Korean people who were being wholly controlled by the authoritarian government. Therefore, despite some concerns that the abolition of the student dress code could result in an economic burden for households and difficulties in regulating students, thereby leading to their delinquency, the government announced the liberalization of the dress code.[107] In this context, the two girls wearing jeans in the Gynobetadine advertisement, one with short fluffy hair and the other with long, straight hair, symbolized the change. At the same time, the advertisement represented the efforts of several

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[106] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 20 May 1983; *Chosun Ilbo*, 24 May; *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 15 June.

[107] Jeong Moo-yong 정무용, "1980nyŏndae chung·kodŭnghaksaeng 'kyobok chayurhwa' choch'iŭi sihaeng 1980 년대 중·고등학생 '교복 자율화' 조치의 시행 (Implementation of Measures for 'Autonomization of School Uniforms' for Middle and High School Students in the 1980s)," *Yŏksabip'yŏng* 135 (2021): 361–93; Park Hae-nam 박해남, "88 sŏurollimp'ikkwa sisŏnŭi sahoejŏngch'i 88 서울올림픽과 시선의 사회정치 (The 1988 Olympics in Seoul and the Social Politics of Eyes)," in *Han'guksaenghwalmunhwasa, 1980nyŏndae 한국현대 생활문화사: 1980 년대 (The History of Everyday Life and Culture in Modern Korean in the 1980s)* (Changbi, 2016), 123–50.

entrepreneurs who identified adolescents as a significant consumer group, particularly in the context of the liberalization measures that were occurring within consumer society.[108]

It is noteworthy that the advertisement did not provide any rationale for the necessity of the product for those who wear jeans. As previously discussed, the advertisement articulated the product's benefit of its sterilizing effects on the susceptible vagina. The rationale, whether accurate or not, was internally consistent and presented in the language of science and medicine. This discrepancy can be attributed, at least in part, to the absence of a medical discourse on the relationship between vaginitis, *taeha*, *naeng,* and women's clothing during the 1980s. Indeed, in *The 1989 Hankyoreh,* OB/GYN Chŏng Yu-kon remarked that tight underwear could trap moisture, hold it close to the external genitals, and thus cause vaginitis. However, with the exception of this brief mention of the relationship, the majority of physicians made little reference to the linkage.[109] Nevertheless, the remark on jeans was appealing. Women could perceive changes in their bodies even in the absence of medical references. These changes could include a sense of wetness, odor, an increase in vaginal discharge, or subtle differences that women could not articulate. In this sense, women's bodies themselves served as a reference for the clothing rhetoric.

The company promptly identified the potential linkage of the use of the product, clothing and the sensation of freshness as a viable marketing strategy. In an advertisement for Gynobetadine published in the 1984 *Women Donga*, the company highlighted the product's benefit, stating that it would provide "a sensation of freshness when worn with jeans during picnics, hiking, or exercise." In addition, the advertisement for Gynobetadine, which had been "approved by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs," emphasized its medical benefit, distinguishing it from "conventional cosmetics and cleansers."[110] An advertisement for Gynobetadine in a 1985 issue of the magazine *Sunday Seoul* illustrates that the reference to clothing became an indispensable component of the product's

[108] The measure of liberalization of the dress code was amended in 1986 so that the principals of individual schools can determine the dress code. As more school decided to make their students wear uniforms again since the emendation, in 1989, 12.9% of middle and high school students wore uniforms. Today, a considerable number of middle and high schools stipulate that their students wear uniforms. Sim Kyu-sun 심규선, "*Kyobogimnŭn chunggogyo nŭlgoitta* 교복입는 中高校 늘고있다 (Middle and High Schools Are Increasingly Requiring Their Students to Wear Uniforms)," *Dong-A Ilbo*, 27 December 1989.

[109] Chŏng Yu-kon 정유곤, "Kungmin'gŏn'gang: chilbunbimul 국민건강: 질분비물 (National Health: Vaginal Discharge)," *Hankyoreh*, 12 November 1989.

[110] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Women Donga*, March 1984.

marketing strategy. The advertisement sought to persuade readers to use of Gynobetadine in situations involving wearing “jeans, pantyhose, and underwear made of synthetic fibers.”[111]

The Clean Vagina and New “Etiquette” in the Bedroom

At approximately the same time that Hyundai Pharmaceutical Company was actively marketing its female cleanser for mothers and daughters, a series of advertisements for female or vaginal cleansers, collectively known as “rinse [*rinsŭ*],” began appearing in newspapers. In 1982, Sama Yanghaeng advertised its “Lady’s Rinse Ippŭna” in *The Chosun Ilbo*, and Yŏngdong Pharmaceuticals initiated advertising its “Eve Rinse.” In 1984, Evas Cosmetics commenced promotion of its “Inner Rinse.”

Prior to an examination of the feminine hygiene products designated as “rinse” in Korean, it is essential to elucidate that the term “rinse” possesses a distinct connotation in the Korean language in English. While the term “rinse” in English denotes the act of rinsing, a liquid used for rinsing, or a solution for dyeing hair in English, in South Korea, the term has been used in a manner that differs depending on the evolution of the hair and personal hygiene product markets in that country.

In the 1960s and mid-1970s, the term “rinse” was employed in a manner consistent with its usage in English. At that time, when the majority of Koreans used to shampoo their hair using alkaline soap, cosmeticians advised rinsing the hair with “water containing a few drops of oil or vinegar to remove the “alkaline ingredients.” They recommended rinsing the hair with vinegar, a “rinsing solution,” or lemon juice, following the use of shampoo.[112]

In the late 1970s, with the advent of economic growth, the practice of shampooing and the usage of the term rinse among Koreans underwent a transformation. A notable proportion of the Korean population began to use shampoo in lieu of soap for the purpose of cleansing their hair. A survey of 1,278 people in the four largest cities in 1977 indicated that 57% of the respondents were using

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[111] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Sunday Seoul*, 17 March 1985.

[112] “Poryŏnjiwa mŏri sonjil 볼연지와 머리 손질 (Cheek Rouge and Hair Treatment),” *Dong-A Ilbo*, 27 January 1962; Kim Kyŏng-ae 김경애, “Yuhaeng chotta kkŏch’irhaejin mŏri 『pŭrassing』ŭro yŏnggumirŭl 流行좇다 꺼칠해진 머리 『브랏싱』으로 永久美를 (Changing Rough Hair Caused by Following the Fashion to a Permanently Beautiful One by Brushing),” *Dong-A Ilbo*, 26 August 1965; “Yŏgo chorŏpsaengdŭri arayahal chihye: chuniŏdŭrŭi miyong 女高 졸업생들이 알아야할 지혜: 주니어들의 美容 (Female High School Graduates Wisdom: Beauty Treatments for Juniors),” *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 4 February 1974; “Kŏch’in p’ibue hyusigŭl 거친 皮膚에 휴식을 (Allow Rough Skin to Rest),” *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 16 August 1974.

shampoo, with a higher prevalence among women (75%) compared to men (36.3%).[113] By the early 1980s, the shift in practice was no longer confined to urban areas. In his observation, Choi Mun-ki, a journalist, noted that "even girls in the backwoods sought satisfaction through the use of running water and shampoo for washing their hair."[114] In response to these developments, in the mid-1970s, shampoo manufacturers, primarily cosmetic companies, introduced conditioners for rinsing under the category of "rinse[*rinsŭ*]," or "hair rinse [*heŏrinsŭ*]." This subsequently led to the term "rinse" becoming a generic term for conditioners.[115] Given this context surrounding the personal hygiene product market in the early 1980s, the companies' designation of their female vaginal cleanser as "rinse" can be understood as efforts to position their products as special treatment solutions for female intimate areas, akin to conditioners.

Furthermore, the advertisements for these female rinses shared another component of the emphasis on their sexual purpose, which was aligned with that of the miraculous *yeppŭni* in 1980. Sama Yanghaeng's Lady's Rinse Ippŭna evokes us of the *yeppŭni* not only through its analogous names but also through an implied contraction. In the advertisement, Sama Yanghaeng included the phrase, "fresh feeling as if the significant part is tightening." Yŏngdong Pharmaceutical recommended the use of using its Inner Rinse "after ***pubu*** [married couple] **relations**, washing secretions such as cream, or suppositories for a pleasant feeling" [original emphasis]. This strategy positioned the product as a sexual aid for married couples who were using temporary contraceptive methods by persuading them to wash away contraceptive residues.[116]

Evas Cosmetics also underscored the sexual purpose of its Inner Rinse, albeit in a manner that differed from the approaches taken by these two companies. In contrast to Sama Yanghaeng and Yŏngdong Pharmaceutical, which ceased advertising their products in major newspapers since 1982,

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[113] The survey was conducted by the Lisŭ PR Research Institute. It was one of the market research companies that has started to flourished in South Korea since 1973. "Ach'imsiksa: ppang·uyujŭlgy—risŭ PR「saenghwalssŭpkwan」chosa 아침食事: 빵·우유즐겨—리스 PR「생활습관」조사 (People Having Breakfast with Bread and Milk: 'Survey of Lifestyle by the Lisŭ PR Company')," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 22 June 1977; Shin In-sup 신인섭 and Suh Bum-suk 서범석, *Han'gukkwanggosa 한국광고사 (The History of Advertisement in Korea), 3rd ed*. (Nanam, 2011), 326.

[114] Choi Mun-ki 최문기, "Chŏn'guk「1il Saengwalgwŏn」 전국「1 일生活圈化」(The Whole Country That Became a One-Day Life Zone)," *Chosun Ilbo*, 18 August 1981.

[115] "Saengp'ilp'umŭi p'umjil·kagyŏktŭng yŏronjosanasŏ 生必品의 품질·가격등 여론조사나서 (A Poll on the Quality and Price of Daily Necessities)," *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 23 April 1976.

[116] Eve Rinse®, Yŏngdong Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 12 January 1982; *Dong-A Ilbo*, 24 December 1982.

Evas Cosmetics has consistently promoted its Inner Rinse and positioned sexuality in its advertisements since 1984. In part due to this marketing strategy, in addition to its Syambad body wash, Inner Rinse proved to be a significant contributor to the company's growth and success, enabling it to evolve from a relatively new entity in the cosmetic market established in 1974 to become one of the top eight cosmetic manufacturers in South Korea by 1991.[117]

In this regard, an analysis of advertisements for successful Inner Rinse provides valuable insights into the ways in which vaginal cleansers were marketed to the contemporary women consumers. In its advertisements, concerns about vaginal diseases and a normal vaginal state were also represented, while pleasant feelings and sexual aspects were distinctive. To illustrate, in the 1984 advertisement for Inner Rinse, the company recommended the product for use "before and after menstruation," "in the presence of secretions and their resultant odor," "after bathing or in the absence of bathing," "in the presence of a sense of stickiness or unpleasantness," and "before and after *pubu* [married couple] relations." The company also invoked the familiar concerns about illness, disease, and the normal vagina with the following sentence: "The synergistic effect of its unique eight ingredients will help you to maintain a normal pH in the vagina, prevent *naeng*, *taeha*, and vaginal inflammation, and eradicate bad odor."[118]

The reference to a normal vagina and diseases became a recurring theme in subsequent advertisements. In an advertisement for Inner Rinse in July 1984, the company associated with vulnerability of women's genitals and the needs of female vaginal washes as follows.

> *We all love a vacation, but the unclean environment and incomplete sanitation facilities on vacation make women's delicate areas more susceptible to bacterial attack, making them vulnerable. Women have to be extra careful about cleanliness in crowded places. This vacation, prepare vacation essential Inner Rinse. Inner Rinse, the new type of rinse, provides gentle vaginal cleansing and apparent efficacy in preventing* naeng*,* taeha*, and vaginal inflammation as well as a subtle fragrance. With Inner Rinse, you'll be in perfect vacation mode.*[119]

[117] "Hwajangp'umŏpch'e chunghawigwŏn p'andobyŏnhwa 화장품업체 中下位圈 판도변화 (The Shift in the Landscape of Mid- and Small Ranked Cosmetic Companies," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 25 June 1991; "Naegojang sanggongin <38> pyeongtaek 내고장 商工人 <38> 平澤 (3) (The Businessman in Our Region <38> Pyeongtaek)," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 5 November 1991.

[118] Inner Rinse, Evas Cosmetics, advertisement, *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, 13 June 1984.

[119] Inner Rinse, Evas Cosmetics, advertisement, *Chosun Ilbo*, 14 July 1984.

Subsequent advertisements emphasized vaginal cleanliness in the context of sexual relationships. In an advertisement from 1984, the company claimed: “Healthy and clean bodies bring you and your partner great satisfaction. If you respect your partner, please use [Inner Rinse] before the couple’s relationship and after it. That is the etiquette between a couple.” [120] Another advertisement from 1985 explicitly depicted a massage related to vaginal cleansing and sexual intercourse. The advertisement’s headline read “New Culture in the Bedroom,” and it was presented in a bold, prominent font.[121]

Entangled Health, Senses, Emotions, and Cleanliness

Medical column in public media from the mid-1980s indicate that the majority of physicians endorsed vaginal cleansing per se as a preventive measure at that time, although they did not recommend specific products for this purpose. In an article on the risk of vaginitis in *The 1984 Dong-A Ilbo,* the journalist Sŏng Ha-un presented the opinion of Kim Seung-jo, a professor in the OB/GYN Department at Kangnam St. Mary’s Hospital. The author reported that vaginitis, which was more prevalent than even the common cold among women over the age of twenty, manifested as mild symptoms such as itching on the external genitals and an increase in *naeng* or vaginal discharge. However, it can also result in more severe complications, including infertility or uterine cancer. According to Professor Kim, the risk can be significantly reduced through the implementation of regular bathing or vaginal cleansing practices. He concluded that “making an effort to be clean in everyday life helps to prevent vaginitis.”[122]

In a medical column published in *Maeil Business Newspapers* during the same year, urologist Kwak Tae-hŭi recommended vaginal cleansing (*twinmul*) twice a week. His advice included some intriguing clinical observations about women’s vaginal cleansing practices. He reported that a significant number of women expressed pride in the “frequent cleansing of their precious areas,” which they perceived to be on par with the daily practices of “teeth brushing and face washing.” Some women regarded the practice of “cleansing the vaginal opening” prior to sexual intercourse as a matter of “etiquette,” which is reminiscent of the aforementioned Inner Rinse advertisement. He expressed concerns about this practice, which “may have originated from the intention of washing away the smelly and sticky *taeha,*” potentially transferring pathogens from unclean fingers to the vagina. Otherwise, it may result

[120] Inner Rinse, Evas Cosmetics, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 21 September 1984.

[121] Inner Rinse, Evas Cosmetics, advertisement, *Dong-A Ilbo*, 27 March 1985.

[122] Sŏng Ha-un 성하운, “Chiryŏm chosim: pangch’ihamyŏn chagungam Wihŏm 질염 조심: 방치하면 자궁암 위험 (Be Aware of Vaginitis, If Ignored, It May Lead to Uterine Cancer),” *Dong-A Ilbo*, 20 January 1984.

in the eradication of beneficial bacteria within the vagina, such as Döderlein bacillus, which produces lactic acid. He articulated that this creates an unfavorable environment for the proliferation of pathogens and thus protects the genitals. Consequently, from the physician's perspective, the practice of "deep vaginal cleansing" may render the vagina susceptible to suppurative bacteria. That was the reason why he recommended that "only twice a week" is an appropriate frequency for the cleansing practice.[123]

Similarly, as the author Nam Sang-sŏk indicated in the aforementioned article in a 1986 issue of *Women Donga*, physicians did not entirely deny the benefit of vaginal cleansing. The journalist reported that among experts, the prevailing view on products for vaginal cleansing was that these products are not necessary, while there was a consensus that vaginal cleansing using feminine washes might prevent disease. Even a professor in an OB/GYN department at a university hospital, who requested anonymity and described such products as "water with a little antiseptic and flavorings," commented on the products as follows, albeit cynically: "It could disinfect."[124]

Pharmacists, who had a more intimate relationship with patients than physicians, concurred with the view that regular vaginal cleansing is one of the most significant and easiest precautions against vaginitis. In a 1986 issue of the magazine *Ŭiyakchŏngbo*, pharmacist No Sŭng-u presented his diagnosis and prescription for *taehajŭng* as well as his opinions on vaginal cleansing.[125] Upon examining a patient presenting with *taehajŭng*, he would diagnose the underlying cause and provide a visual presentation, utilizing "a color picture book and an illustrated treatment guide." In addition to the prescription, he conveyed notes, which "elicited favorable responses from the patients," for five precautions: (1) after defecation, wipe from front to back with toilet paper; (2) do not cleanse the vagina with an enema syringe; (3) during menstruation, replace pads frequently; (4) cleanse the vagina every evening using soap, rinse with clean water, and dry well; and (5) if one spouse is infected, the other spouse should get a prescription.[126]

[123] Kwak Tae-hŭi was a clinician and a board member of the Korea Medical Association in the 1980s. He graduated from the Medical College at SNU in 1960 and he wrote enormous columns dealing with not only medical issues in his specialty but also general opinion, and the article I cited was one of the medical columns. Kwak Tae-hŭi 곽대희, "Chinach'in ch'ŏnggyŏl 지나친 清潔 (Excessive Cleanliness)," *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 17 October 1984.

[124] Nam Sang-sŏk, "Whether Feminine Washes Are Really Effective."

[125] *The magazine Ŭiyakchŏngbo (Drug Information),* targeting pharmacists, has been published since 1975. It includes some advertisements for medicines, 1pharmacists' clinical experiences, and medical guides for diagnosis and treatment.

[126] No Sŭng-u 노성우, "Taehajŭng ch'ihŏm not'ŭ 대하증 치험 노트 (Taehajŭng Clinical Trial Note)," *Ŭiyakchŏngbo*, November 1986, 118–19.

Indeed, some women used vaginal cleansers in accordance with the recommendations provided by their physicians or as prophylactic measures against vaginitis, *naengjŭng*, or excessive vaginal discharge. An Mi-suk became aware of Gynobetadine at a hospital following the birth of her second child via a Caesarean section in 1986. Subsequently, she used of Gynobetadine occasionally.[127] In approximately 1990, Kim Kang-ja began the use of Gynobetadine, following the birth of her first child. She had previously acquired knowledge about medical vaginal cleansers due to her employment as an administrative manager at a hospital during her twenties in the 1980s. Her responsibilities included the reviews of prescriptions and financial records until her departure from the position due severe morning caused by her pregnancy. In discussions with other mothers, she recalled the knowledge from her former office, which she had previously disregarded, that "alkali soap kills all good bacteria" and the rationale behind the prescription of Gynobetadine. Subsequently, even though she did not experience vaginitis or *naengjŭng*, she procured Gynobetadine from a pharmacy and used it as a "preventive measure." In addition to "the wine-colored cleanser," she explored the use of other vaginal cleansers in various forms, including "acidic, non-alkali, and honey" soap. She stated that, while a daily showering is not a necessity, daily genital cleansing is a natural practice.[128]

As the discussion with other mothers recalled to Kim Kang-ja the details about Gynobetadine, women would become aware of such products through their close friends and subsequently use them for the purpose of maintaining vaginal cleanliness. In 1983, Kim Yŏng-suk used "a violet-colored" feminine wash, the name of which she could not recall, to maintain vaginal cleanliness following the birth of her first son. However, she promptly discontinued its use, deeming it "expensive but not so effective." The recommendation was made by a door-to-door cosmetics saleswoman who regularly visited her.

It is noteworthy that these cosmetics saleswomen were distinct from the aforementioned douche peddlers who impersonated FP field workers. In the 1970s and 1980s, the saleswomen were predominantly married women with a "strong motivation" to succeed, who were responsible for the majority of the sales in the cosmetic industry.[129] At that time, there was a paucity of employment opportunities for married women who were seeking additional income. In addition to the insurance

[127] An Mi-suk, interview.

[128] Kim Kang-ja, interview.

[129] Lee Jong-tae 김종태, et al., "Han'gukhwajangp'umsanŏp yut'onggyŏngnoŭi yŏksajŏk paljŏn 한국화장품산업 유통경로의 역사적 발전 (A Study on the Historical Evolution of Channel Structure of the Cosmetics Industry in Korea)," *Kyŏngyŏngsahak* 52 (2009): 157–75.

and dairy industries, the cosmetic industry was one of a few industries that provided such opportunities for married women.[130] In the cosmetic industry, the saleswomen distributed new cosmetic products that were not available through conventional distribution channels to housewives. Additionally, they disseminated information regarding beauty treatments, and were occasionally accompanied by beauty instructors employed by cosmetic companies. As a result of the practice of allowing credit sales, the frequency of visits from salespeople to consumers increased.

These repeated visits contributed to the development of rapport between the two groups. For instance, in 1976, Choi Sun-ja, a 37-year-old married mother of four who worked as a salesperson for the cosmetics company Pacific Chemicals, made approximately twenty visits per a day, carrying bags or pulling a cart full of cosmetic products and collecting accounts receivable. One of her regular customers became so close that she would treat Choi to lunch, or they would "share inside stories" or lend each other money.[131] In this sense, the saleswomen served as reliable informants, akin to friends or neighbors for their housewife customers rather than mere peddlers. This kind of rapport explains why Kim Yŏng-suk had accepted the advice and promotion from the saleswoman who the recommended vaginal cleanser stating that the "vagina should be clean after delivery."[132]

Yi Mi-kyŏng recalled not only the "red" Gynobetadine but also other feminine cleansers that she had attempted to use since the late 1980s, following the advice from "people around her." She stated that she used these products "just to keep clean." However, her use of such feminine washes was not sustained for an extended period because she did not feel "any effect" on her body. In addition, some articles in newspapers and magazines that the cleanser could even "kill lactobacillus," and "beneficial germs" also prompted her to opt for water over such products.[133]

The experiences of these women indicate that, despite the efforts of vaginal cleanser manufacturers to differentiate their products from those of competitors through advertisements, in

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[130] In the insurance industry, married women were typically in charge of insurance sales, while in the dairy industry, they were often employed for a dairy delivery route. Scholars have yet to devote significant attention to their activities in South Korea as a subject of a historical inquiry. While the newspaper article written by Sang-hun Choe focuses on the women in the dairy industry known as *yak'urŭt'ŭ ajumma,* it nonetheless gives a glimpse of the landscape of the labor market for married women at that time. Sang-hun Choe, "'Yogurt Ladies' of South Korea Deliver More Than Dairy," *New York Times*, 14 November 2020.

[131] Yi Tuk-hŭi 이덕희, "Hwajangp'um oep'anwŏn ch'oe Sun-ja Yŏsa 화장품 외판원 崔順慈여사 (Cosmetic Salesperson Mrs. Ch'oe Sun-ja)," *Women Donga*, August 1976, 273–9.

[132] Kim Yŏng-suk, interview.

[133] Yi Mi-kyŏng, interview.

practice, women learned about these products through diverse sources and chose them for a variety of reasons. For women, the specific classification of the product, whether medical cleansers or cosmetic feminine washes, was not a significant factor. While women would expect the product to maintain vaginal cleanliness or to prevent vaginal infection or inflammation, this expectation was never absolute. If they determined that the product was ineffective for their individual bodies, they ceased using it.

From the mid-1980s onwards, the ambiguous demarcation between medical vaginal washes and non-medical or cosmetic feminine washes reciprocally shaped manufacturers' advertisements and women's use of the products. Manufacturers in both the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries, who had previously begun to appropriate the rhetoric and discourses of the other industry, sought to obfuscate the boundary between the two. One illustrative example of this appropriation can be observed in an advertisement for Gynobetadine in a 1985 issue of the magazine *Sunday Seoul.* Although the advertisement reiterated the product's medical benefits, the tagline "In beloved women–Gynobetadine" above the photo of a female model wearing a sheer nightgown conveyed sexual implications, which the cosmetic company Evas had emphasized in its Inner Rinse advertisement. The publication of this advertisement in *Sunday Seoul per se* indicates that the feminine wash was appealing to a sexual aspect. By the mid-1970s, although the magazine was not a highbrow publication, it was not a tabloid either. The magazine would solicit advice on contraceptive technology from prestigious university professors and feature profiles of young, virtuous women presented by their parents in a proud tone. By the mid-1980s, however, the magazine had evolved into a tabloid format, featuring celebrity gossip, sex advice, cartoons, and provocative images of young women. The advertisement for Gynobetadine, along with another feminine wash named Solbakta by Boryung Pharmaceuticals, became part of these sexualized, sensationalistic contents in the tabloid magazine.[134]

The article in the magazine *Women Donga,* published in July 1986, was written with the intention of criticizing the circumstances surrounding women's vaginal cleansing and the vaginal product market. In the article, briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter, the journalist Nam Sang-sŏk speculated that the manufacturers were promoting these products "as if they are highly beneficial," citing the opinions of professors in the OB/GYN department at esteemed university hospitals, such as Hwang Dong-ho at Yonsei University's Medical College. In addition to the opinions of Korean physicians, Nam referenced

[134] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Sunday Seoul*, 17 March 1985; Solbakta, Boryung Pharmaceuticals, advertisement, *Sunday Seoul*, 17 March 1985.

the view of American gynecologist Bruce Shepard, which had been published in the renowned American women's magazine *McCall's*. Nam stated that Dr. Shepard argued that frequent douching disrupts the chemical and biological balance by removing even beneficial bacteria from the "self-cleaning vagina," which can cause allergic reactions and even inflammation of the uterus and the fallopian tubes. In the article, he implicitly characterized women as gullible consumers who use "unnecessary feminine washes" due to exaggerated advertisements, despite the existence of medical facts that he believes are clear.

From the male journalist's perspective, it was also a significant issue that many women lacked the awareness to differentiate between medical vaginal cleansers, such as Gynobetadine, and non-medical feminine washes, which should not be used for cleansing the inner vagina. He sought clarification from an MHSA official regarding the distinctions between these two categories, citing the physicians' observation. During the course of the conversation, he stated that despite the legal designation on the aforementioned products, women who engage in vaginal cleansing rarely distinguished between the specific purposes of the products, whether they are medical vaginal cleansers for washing the inner vagina or feminine washes for that of the external genitals. He then proceeded to indicate that this prompted experts to question the practical relevance of the legal labels in question. In response to the inquiry, the official stated, "We have not certified the use of non-pharmaceutical drugs for the purpose of washing the inner vagina." Accordingly, from the perspective of the official, if non-pharmaceutical drugs are used as washes for the inner vagina, it is the consumers' responsibility. The journalist did not explicitly add any comments to the official's response. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the conversation was quoted with the intention of criticizing the authorities for relinquishing regulatory responsibility and contributing to the misuse of feminine washes approved only as external genital cleansers by uninformed women.

However, as evidenced by women's experiences, women's use of these products—if, as the author suggested, misuse or abuse—was not solely the result of the actions of manufacturers and the authorities who oversaw such manufacturers. Medical advice regarding gynecological diseases and vaginal cleansing also influenced the use of vaginal cleansing products. Moreover, women were able to determine whether a vaginal product was suitable for their bodies and discontinue its use based on their corporeal response to the technology. In this context, the medical facts attached to photos of hemorrhages, ulcers, and uterine cancer caused by vaginitis in the article, provided sufficient grounds for the continued use of vaginal products rather than their disposal.

In the December 1986 issue of *Women Donga*, Hyundai Pharmaceutical Company featured a two-page advertisement for Gynobetadine. The advertisement presented a question, "Is feminine cleanser really necessary?" in the upper left-hand corner. A sentence in navy bold Gothic type was presented across both pages against a white snowy plain, as if answering the question: "Yes, it is necessary." Regular readers of the magazine would have recognized that this advertisement responded to Nam Sang-sŏk's criticism of feminine washes and the provocative question of the product's efficacy five months prior. It would appear that the advertisement refuted the article's conclusion that such products were not as "effective" as they claimed.[135]

However, the wording of the advertisement differed from that of Nam's article. The advertiser made a subtle alteration to the original inquiry, focusing on the question of necessity. In this context, it is not unexpected that, under the bold sentence, the advertiser reiterated its established repertoire of claims, including the prevention of *naeng, taeha*, itching, and vaginitis, issues related to menstruation, and a fresh, pleasant feeling. The advertiser was likely aware of the journalist's underlying criticism directed at the majority of Korean female consumers, who seem to be misled by various promotions for no apparent reason. In this context, the question regarding necessity was designed to prompt consumers to consider the various purposes of vaginal cleansing and their own interpretations of these purposes, which were shaped not only by medical knowledge but also by their own bodily experiences. These interpretations were influenced by physicians and manufacturers, as well as by women who had desires and concerns. The desires and concerns have been woven by shifts in women's roles in Korean society, concern for their health, and desire for sexual pleasure.

During the colonial period, Korean women, who had previously been confined to the domestic sphere, began to be regarded as imperative caregivers. This shift gave rise to pervasive discourses on women's health, wherein the practice of vaginal cleansing and vaginal discharges were viewed in relation to the disease or symptom called *taehajŭng*/*naengjŭng*. The concepts of *naeng* and *taeha*, which originated in East Asian medicine but were intertwined with biomedicine, influenced women's perceptions of their vaginas and shaped medical discourses about the onset of their periods. Following the liberation from Japan, physicians produced medical advice on vaginal discharges and *naeng* and *taeha*, which led to an increased number of women associating their vaginal discharge with their health.

[135] Gynobetadine, Hyŏndae Pharmaceutical Company, advertisement, *Women Donga*, December 1986.

Throughout the 1970s, the national family planning program brought about significant shifts in married women's contraceptive technology usage, associated bodily changes, and perceptions of sexual pleasure. In the early 1980s, manufacturers began to promote vaginal products as a versatile technology that would prevent *naeng* and *taehajŭng,* or excessive vaginal discharge, and improve women's sexual pleasure. By fabricating preexisting medical discourses of the susceptible vagina, sexual desires, and women's bodily changes as a result of contraceptive efforts or fashion changes, they attempted to establish vaginal products as a necessity that promises still versatile but less specific usages.

This chapter concentrated on the manner in which the technology's enablement has been shaped in response to sociocultural shifts rather than on the technology's demands and requests. Nevertheless, the fundamental premise underlying the affordance of the technology remains valid when examining active users. The fact that technology does not force but affords enables us to identify that user of vaginal technology behaved in ways that differed from those anticipated by its developers or manufacturers. Despite the commercial success of feminine wash products, this does not necessarily indicate that women view these versatile products as everyday necessities. A number of women who experienced changes in their bodies used such products. However, if they determined that the products did not fit their bodies, they discontinued their use and sought alternatives, such as warm, clean water. Consequently, women's use of vaginal technologies was shaped by a range of old and new references, but the most crucial and ultimate reference point was their own bodies, which only they could fully observe, feel, sense, and interpret.

6. Conclusion

This dissertation examined the active involvement of South Korean women with the technologies related to three female bodily experiences—menstruation, contraception, and vaginal discharge—throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The term "feminine technology" was employed in this dissertation to bring old and modern artifacts and methods associated with women's biology into the history of technology. In this way, the term feminine technology encompasses not only intrauterine devices and oral contraceptive pills, but also disposable menstrual pads and so-called feminine washes, or what I call feminine technologies. Furthermore, the term facilitated the positioning of women as users of these technologies. The preceding three chapters explored the various methods through which women engaged with feminine technology. This entailed their selection of a specific feminine technology from a range of preexisting and contemporary technologies, the modifications they made to these technologies to fit their bodies, and the alternatives they considered. By employing the concepts of the technology's affordance and its mechanisms, these chapters investigated what each technology requested, demanded from women, allowed them, and how women interpreted and responded to these demands, requests, and enablement.

Until the mid-1970s, the majority of Korean women made menstrual pads to fit their individual bodies using locally accessible materials. They used, washed, dried, and reused these homemade pads. In accordance with the idea that menstrual blood should be concealed even from the gaze of family members, the homemade pads allowed women to deal with menstrual blood. Concurrently, they demanded a series of actions to conceal them. In response to this demand, Korean women stored their homemade menstrual pads in a secret location until they could wash them with other laundry, often using stream water or at night. Subsequently, they dried the pads in a shaded area of the residence and collected them at dawn to avoid exposure to other family members. The advent of disposable menstrual pads in television commercials in the early 1970s prompted feelings of embarrassment rather than enthusiasm among women about the products that would relieve the burden of washing and drying used fabric menstrual pads. For them, the disposable menstrual pad represented a supplementary menstrual technology, particularly for special occasions such as weddings or when traveling away from home.

It was not until the late 1970s that more women entered the workforce and secondary schools and thus spent more time outside their homes, that they began to view disposable menstrual pads as a necessary menstrual technology that they could more easily carry and replace. However, the preexisting idea that menstruation should be hidden shaped the disposable products as a technology that demanded and requested a series of actions to conceal purchasing them, carrying them, and throwing them away. Concurrently, users found the gap between the manufactured products and their bodies, which had different shapes and menstrual patterns. Thus, users devised subtle techniques to conceal their product purchases in public and modify the technology to fit their individual bodies.

These shifts in women's social positions and the location of their bodies were a consequence of the evolution of their social roles. In the late 1960s, the South Korean government began designating the role of future mothers to female adolescents, anticipating that they would support their husbands, who were designated as industrial warriors. In this process of nation-building, the government incorporated menstrual management education as part of sex education, emphasizing that menstruation was a "natural" biological event. This knowledge was disseminated through various channels, including teen magazines, sex education books, and menstrual product manufacturers. As a result, female adolescents began to view menstruation as a normal process, aligning with the government's intentions to some extent. Additionally, they began sharing their menstrual experiences and knowledge with friends, in ways that the government did not anticipate, thereby contributing to the dissemination and reproduction of menstrual knowledge.

In the late 1970s, another disposable menstrual product, the tampon, emerged as a new option for women. The product promised to emancipate women from the constraints associated with menstruation, such as the inability to engage in strenuous exercise, bathing, and swimming. Some women expressed concern that the use of tampons might damage their physical chastity, as represented by the hymen. Others encountered difficulties in inserting this strange device into their vaginas. They shared their concerns and experiences with female friends or through teen magazines. Furthermore, in the early 1980s, young adolescents were introduced to the concept that menstruation is a normal biological process, while the menstruating body, particularly the vagina during menstruation, is vulnerable and even susceptible to infection. It was therefore unsurprising that the majority of adolescents rejected tampons. For them, this strange menstrual technology demanded not only the physical manipulation of intricate actions to insert it into their vaginas but also the overcoming of multiple concerns about inserting something into their vulnerable vaginas. The demands and requests of the technology were unacceptable to them.

Similarly, married women made decisions related to contraception in accordance with shifts in the material and sociocultural contexts surrounding them. Until the early 1960s, the majority of intellectuals and political leaders opposed contraception, citing the importance of a large population for the nation's workforce, military strength, and electorate. However, South Korean women were employing various contraceptive methods at the time, including self-induced abortion with quinine or herbs, inserting gold rings into the uterus, or using smuggled condoms and foam tablets.

The 1961 announcement of the national family planning program to reduce population growth had a profound impact on the range of contraceptive options available to women. With the assistance of international organizations and Western countries concerned about the population explosion in developing countries, the Korean government distributed a greater range of highly effective contraceptive technologies—including the Lippes loop, oral contraceptive pills, and tubal ligation—at significantly reduced costs. These measures allowed women to procure a range of contraceptives, regardless of their socioeconomic status. By the late 1970s, Korean women could readily obtain oral contraceptive pills through the government network for the FPP or purchase them in pharmacies without the necessity of a physician's visit or a prescription. Alternatively, women could undergo laparoscopic tubal ligation with minimal financial burden and, in some cases, with the option of abortion, which was technically illegal but facilitated by the government in pursuit of population control. During this transition, Korean women embraced modern contraceptives as a technology that allowed them to fulfill their individual desires.

However, the process of making several contraceptives available was gradual, and individual contraceptive technologies still demanded and requested certain actions from individual users. The decision to select a specific contraceptive technology was shaped by the interplay of material and sociocultural conditions that constrained individual women's choices. The options available to women were contingent upon a number of factors, including the responses of their bodies to individual contraceptives, the willingness of their husbands and parents-in-law to cooperate with their contraceptive efforts, and the accessibility of medical facilities offering contraceptive procedures. In this sense, for women, determining a suitable contraceptive technology for their own bodies was always an interpretation of the bodily changes caused by a certain contraceptive, as well as a negotiation between suitable contraceptives in the sociocultural context in which the users situated themselves.

The women's interpretation of the bodily changes that accompanied the transformation in women's social roles is the primary narrative in the history of vaginal technology in South Korea, as elucidated in Chapter 5. The ways that Korean women thought about their vaginal state, represented by vaginal discharge, underwent a transformation. In consequence of this transformation, they chose

to use vaginal technology in various ways. In colonial Korea, the growing interest in women as mothers of the colonial country and their bodies and health led to the proliferation of discourses associated with women's health and diseases. In the discourses, excessive vaginal discharge was explained as a disease or symptom from the perspective of biomedicine and in terms of traditional East Asian medicine such as *taehajŭng* and *naengjŭng*. Despite the fact that the medical discourses did not reach the majority of Korean women in colonial Korea, as they were illiterate, the concepts and terms would shape women's ideas of their vaginas as well as the medical discourses in the subsequent period.

Following Korea's liberation from Japan, medical professionals began to use the terms *taeha* and *naeng* to describe vaginal discharge in general, thus distinguishing between healthy and unhealthy vaginal conditions. However, there was no consensus among physicians regarding the criteria for defining a healthy or normal state of the secretion. Some medical professionals argued that a healthy woman's vagina is moist but does not leak secretions. Accordingly, excessive vaginal discharge is indicative of an underlying abnormality that requires treatment, including self-douching. Some physicians introduced the concept of a "self-cleaning vagina," whereby beneficial bacteria in innate mucus serve to safeguard against pathogen invasion, and the mucus may intermittently flow from the vagina. It was recommended that the vagina be left undisturbed unless abnormal vaginal discharge was observed. However, the characteristics of vaginal discharge were inherently too vague and subjective to serve as an indicator of normalcy, abnormality, or pathology. The color, volume, consistency, and odor of vaginal discharge change depending on not only diseases but also the normal menstrual cycle, pregnancy, sexual excitement, and even the seasons, as even physicians acknowledged at the time.

Consequently, while such medical discourses prompted an increasing number of women to recognize the presence of vaginal discharges and their potential correlation with their overall health, women interpreted these vaginal discharges and responded to them in different ways. Some women who perceived their vaginal discharge as indicative of a symptom of disease sought the counsel of medical professionals. Alternatively, women used douches and douche solutions, known as "feminine washes," which were manufactured by entrepreneurs who identified and responded to the concerns and interests of women related to their vaginal health. While some women did not perceive their vaginal discharge as a symptom of disease, they attempted to maintain their vaginas clean by cleansing them every day with boiled and cooled water, soap, douches, and/or feminine washes. By the 1980s, the majority of women no longer viewed these products as treatments for diseases. However, they continued to use feminine washes as a cleansing agent that allowed them to protect against vaginal infection and enhance their pleasant feeling.

The history of these feminine technologies reflected the changes in the ways that women thought about and experienced their bodies. These changes were in part shaped by sociocultural shifts and the power of knowledge and discourse, which have been discussed within the framework of Foucauldian analysis of the discursive body. The increasing focus on the female adolescent body as a future mother who would reproduce healthy human resources gave rise to a dominant discourse on menstruation, which was regarded as normal but nevertheless requiring management. The discourse shaped the methods by which young women perceived their menstruating bodies and engaged with them, as well as their selection and use of menstrual technology. The notion of the modern Korean mother who gives birth to the optimal number of children, including sons, and raises them well contributed to a greater acceptance of contraception and the pursuit of alternatives to determining fetus' sex. In the 1980s, as the notion that the vaginal state is relevant to reproductive and general health gained traction, an increasing number of women became preoccupied with their vaginal state, monitoring vaginal discharge, striving to maintain vaginal cleanliness, and using vaginal products from manufacturers who capitalized on these concerns.

However, the experiences were shaped not only by these discourses but also by women's corporeal experiences of their bodily changes. As the number of women in the workforce and pursuing higher education increased, female bodies were often situated beyond the confines of their homes or in public domains where they encountered challenges in using homemade menstrual pads. Although the shift had already commenced in colonial Korea, the majority of women's bodies remained confined to the discourse of the newspapers and magazines. It was not until more women encountered menstruation in public spaces that the medical discourse on menstrual management began to shape the ways in which women considered and dealt with menstruation in their everyday lives—that is, in their lived experiences.

The historical narratives surrounding contraceptives and vaginal technologies demonstrate the historicity of women's bodily changes. In the latter half of the twentieth century, Korean women became aware of the vaginal state, as indicated by vaginal discharge, and expressed concern about it. The medical discourse has led to the understanding that vaginal discharge is an indicator of a normal and healthy vagina and, furthermore, of the overall state of the body. However, the discourses and the vaginal product market have been driven by women's corporeal changes resulting from the increased use of contraceptive technologies, such as vaginitis or an increase in vaginal discharges. In other words, these bodily changes were some of the results of women's engagement with feminine technologies. The users' experiences or complaints about such changes led medical professionals to produce medical discourses about vaginal discharge. In this sense, the history of feminine technologies

illustrates how discourse and women's experiences were mutually shaped by shifts in the sociocultural context surrounding women's bodies.

The diverse and alternative methods through which Korean women employed feminine technologies illustrate that female users were actively engaged with technology in ways that developers, inventors, engineers, manufacturers, and bureaucrats did not anticipate. For female students and adolescents, the guides on how to manage vulnerable menstruating bodies in teen magazines, sex education books, and sex education classes, as well as promoters of menstrual product manufacturers, constituted just one of the references for their technological choices. Only a small number of women continued to use tampons exclusively for athletic events or swimming. This is contrary to the expectations of tampon manufacturers regarding the uptake of tampons as a replacement for disposable menstrual pads and the anticipated emergence of a third generation of menstrual technology. Some students considered their menstruating bodies incompatible with gym class or swimming during school retreats, thus avoiding such exercises during menstruation with the assistance of female friends, contrary to the recommendations of experts who advised engaging in common exercise during menstruation. Some of them took oral contraceptive pills to regulate their menstrual cycle and thereby transform their vulnerable menstruating bodies into non-menstruating bodies, preparing for travel, athletic competitions, and swimming.

Married women in South Korea also used several contraceptive technologies in different ways than the developers and distributors of these technologies had expected. In the 1950s, when the government prohibited the importation of contraceptives, some women resorted to using American condoms that had been distributed to the US Army for the prevention of venereal diseases. In the 1960s and 1970s, scientists and international population organizations developed the Lippes loops as an economical and effective method for controlling the fertility of ignorant women in developing countries who lacked motivation for contraception. However, when the South Korean government distributed them, Korean women with strong motivations for contraception accepted the loops as camouflaged contraceptives against their husbands or parents-in-law, viewing the resultant side effects as inherent to the contraceptive technology. Some women employed oral contraceptive pills to regulate ovulation and used this technology to ascertain the year, season, month, and even the day of their infant's birth. Some women employed a combination of abortion, which the government had virtually permitted as a population control measure, and technologies for screening fetuses and pregnant women for abnormalities, including amniocentesis and ultrasound scans. These women appropriated these technologies as a means of determining the sex of their fetuses. Since the late 1970s, there has been a notable shift in the relationship between married couples and the concept of contraceptive responsibility. These shifts led some women to consider condoms and vasectomy as

contraceptive technologies that allowed them to avoid the side effects of female contraceptives and to argue for or confirm sharing contraceptive responsibility with their partners.

By the 1980s, South Korean women had come to accept feminine washes as versatile technologies, in part to due to the efforts of feminine wash manufacturers. By appealing to preexisting medical discourses about the susceptible vagina, sexual desires, and women's bodily changes, the manufacturers attempted to establish their products as a necessity. However, despite the establishment of the feminine wash market, the manufacturers' efforts ultimately proved unsuccessful. When women concluded that the products did not fit their bodies, they ceased using them and returned to more reliable traditional technologies, such as clean, lukewarm water.

In this manner, Korean women were actively engaged with feminine technologies, rather than merely passively accepting or rejecting specific technologies. Their active involvement with feminine technologies shaped the technological landscape in South Korea. The technological decisions related to menstruation made by Korean women contributed to the growth of the South Korean menstrual product market. In this market, which was dominated by manufacturers of disposable menstrual pads, other alternatives accounted for only a fraction of sales, even until the 2010s. Concurrently, their use of feminine technologies was not limited to a specific category, such as menstrual technology, contraceptive technology, or vaginal technology. Indeed, a number of adolescents employed the oral contraceptive pill to regulate menstruation. As more women in the 1980s became accustomed to institutional delivery and prenatal checkups, their decisions regarding childbirth prompted physicians to suggest tubal ligation during a C-section or shortly after a vaginal delivery. In part, women may have been inclined to accept the recommendation because it was provided by a medical professional. However, of even greater importance was the timing of the procedure, which was a crucial factor in women's acceptance of the recommendation. For many women, the procedure was undertaken with the benefit of alleviating the fear and pain that would otherwise result from undergoing the procedure alone. In the hospital setting, some women were aware of the potential for determining the fetus' sex through the use of screening and abortion technologies.

Moreover, their involvement did not always extend to the novel, advanced technologies that experts had guaranteed their efficacy or superiority. By the late 1970s, some women had opted for more conventional contraceptive methods, such as the condom and the rhythm method, perceiving them as safer and more accessible alternatives to IUDs, oral contraceptive pills, or surgical sterilization. Women who found feminine washes ineffective for their bodies ceased their use and instead resorted to more traditional substances, such as soap or boiled and cooled water.

By appropriating oral contraceptive technology as menstrual technology, linking hospital delivery with tubal ligation, and fetal screening technology with abortion, and revitalizing traditional

technologies such as condoms, rhythm methods, soap, and clean water, Korean women users shaped the Korean technological landscape, challenging the linear narrative that new technologies replaced old ones. Concurrently, the technological landscape, the shift in the position of women in society, and the concept of their menstruating, fertile, and discharging bodies were mutually shaped. In this sense, by engaging with feminine technologies in active and creative ways, female users—in other words, ordinary women—participated in the fabrication of South Korean society.

This dissertation employed the concepts of the technology's affordance and mechanisms to examine the contexts in which women selected and used individual technologies. Furthermore, it investigated the underlying implications of the technology's affordance, highlighting the creative and occasionally subversive ways in which users interacted with the technology. They devised new techniques, modified the technology to fit their bodies, or appropriated the technologies in ways that extended beyond the expectations of developers or those who promoted the technology. In this dissertation, the concepts were applied variably to analyze the history of three types of feminine technology in each chapter, namely contraceptive, menstrual, and vaginal technologies. The affordance of each technology and its mechanisms proved particularly insightful in examining contraceptive and menstrual technologies, revealing the demands and requests from each technology and the material, social, cultural, and economic contexts that shaped women's choices. In contrast, the study of vaginal technology concentrated on how the technology's enablement was altered in accordance with the social, cultural and economic transformations in South Korea rather than on the technology's demands or requests.

These differences underscore the distinctive characteristics of various types of feminine technology, thereby prompting further inquiry. Where do these differences originate? Why were women more inclined to accept certain feminine technologies, along with their associated requests and demands? What insights can be gained from an analysis of "male technology," defined as material artifacts and methods associated with men's biology, in comparison to feminine or disability-assistive technology? These unanswered questions underscore the potential of exploring bodily technology through the lens of the technology's affordances and mechanisms, which represents challenges for future research.

A further challenge for future research is to investigate other female users not covered in this dissertation. This dissertation concentrated on married women and female students, or those who were regarded as key subjects in specific governmental initiatives. However, beyond the national family program and state-led education system, there were single women in non-legal sexual relationships, sex workers, and female factory workers who were less educated and primarily suffered from severe working conditions. These minorities have frequently been the subject of discussion in

Korean history, particularly in relation to their experiences of violence and exploitation under the two authoritarian governments throughout the 1960s and 1980s. As some Korean historians have noted, such violent and exploitative elements were aspects of their lives rather than the entirety of their existence. The approach to the subtle interactions between women and feminine technologies can be used as a lens for better understanding these women's daily lives because it allows us to recognize women who have experienced bodily changes as active users of technology rather than passive acceptors or victims. Furthermore, the approach to feminine technologies and their users could be extended to the global history of feminine technologies and to women who shared experiences of menstruation, contraception, and vaginal discharge, even though they were situated in different places and times.

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재고: 교과서 자유발행제 추진과 관련하여 (The Change of Textbook Publishing System and the Reconsideration on the Article25 of Copyright Act: In Relation to Promoting Freely-published Textbook System)." *Sanŏpchaesan'gwŏn* 66 (2021): 367–415.

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