

Debates about 'A Good Wife and Wise Mother' and Tradition in Colonial Korea¹

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Above all, the enlightened intellectuals of Joseon during the end of Joseon and the early colonial period emphasized the necessity of female education for the development of the country. It was urged that being educated women and good wives and wise mothers, women should display their abilities as members of the country and the people. This was common to both colonialists and nationalists. It was because they were conscious of the country and the people based on the theory of Western modern civilization. The education for a good wife and wise mother was a common denominator constituting the political theory of the 'nation' of Joseon and the 'Empire' of Japan running in an opposite direction.

However, the group of new-style women born through female education didn't always meet their demand. Here, the advocates of the theory of a good wife and wise mother counterattacked the criticism of new women. The new women who opposed patriarchy and expressed sexuality openly were awkward beings unsuitable to the authority of the colonial state and the intellectuals of colonial Joseon. Developing a counter theory against the criticism about a good wife and wise mother and producing a new target called 'new women,' they responded one another antagonistically. At the same time, the discourse on a good wife and wise mother went through a new process of transformation. It was because it was reproduced as a traditional image of maternity rather than a new image of womanhood. After all, the discourse on 'new women' during the colonial period assumed a complicated dual character while it gave a blow to the theory of a good wife and wise mother on the one hand and eventually carried out the function to reproduce it in the form of tradition on the other hand.

Keywords: good wife and wise mother, New Woman, female education, tradition, housewife

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I. Preface

A good wife and wise mother in today's Korean society is the image of *Sin-saimdang* and has become a model constituting a traditional image of Korean womanhood. Moreover, the norms of a good wife and wise mother and the inherent moral norms are beautified as 'tradition' and still exert a strong influence on Korean society. In spite of the economic activities of women in these days, they are transformed into a new theory of a good wife and wise mother and are steadily working as an ideology regulating the lives of Korean women. The theory of a good wife and wise mother has been a gender norm for nearly 100 years.

Recently, the theory of a good wife and wise mother has attracted attention in Korea because of the incorrect supposition that a good wife and wise mother was a Confucian and traditional image of womanhood (Son 1977; Park 1984; Lee 1995). Previous studies on a good wife and wise mother only mentioned it in relation to female education or female movements. These studies took 'a good wife and wise mother = a Confucian image of womanhood = a traditional image of Joseon womanhood' for granted in light of women's liberation and concluded that such a view has been followed in the modern educational system.

However, a new trend by younger scholars studying the theory of a good wife and wise mother has appeared. They pay attention to the modernity of a good wife and wise mother (Hong 1997; Kim 2004; Kim 2005; Kim 2006; Park 2007). They maintain that the theory of a good wife and wise mother was based on the couple-oriented theory of home which appeared with the West's modern industrial society, when the role of women became significant from a national viewpoint, and a woman was not a producer of sons and daughters but had a maternal role as an educator and was responsible for subsequent female education. But these studies didn't explain why a good wife and wise mother was recognized as a traditional image of womanhood. Also, they didn't grasp the political competition among various forces concerning the theory of a good wife and wise mother.

There is also an argument that the theory of a good wife and wise mother contains modernity and pre-modernity as well (Kawamoto 1999; Sin 1999). They argue that since a good wife and wise mother was a view of womanhood used to describe both modern and traditional characters, it couldn't be defined unilaterally. Such a view falls into the error of interpreting it from a viewpoint of

today. From the viewpoint of today and, in particular, women's liberation, it seems pre-modern. Furthermore, these studies assume an envy toward modern times that accomplished an equality of both sexes.

This study surveys how the female image of a good wife and wise mother that was formed under the condition of an imperialist invasion and historical circumstances was restructured into a traditional image of womanhood. For this purpose, this study will determine the historical conditions in which the role model of a good wife and wise mother appeared, and will survey arguments about the image of a good wife and wise mother and the process in which the theory was reconstructed as a 'traditional' aspect. This will enable us to figure out how the theory of a good wife and wise mother was reconstructed in the name of tradition during the colonial period.

II. A Good Wife and Wise Mother, Symbol of Civilization

After opening its ports, Joseon, threatened by its existence among power countries, needed to construct a rich and powerful country and escape from its national crisis. One solution was to absorb the culture of Western powers and/or Japan and join the ranks of powerful modern countries. In particular, the modernized Japan was an object for Joseon to overcome and also a model to follow. It seemed to Joseon that the national prosperity and defense of Japan derived from not merely military strength but also politics, economics, and cultural modernization. In other words, national prosperity and defense and civilization became a contemporary task and national aim for the intellectuals of late Joseon.

At this point, the necessity for female education was raised in relation with civilization. It was the view of civilized intellectuals that the advancement of culture and the improvement of education for the people were essential to national development. It was at this point that the West's theory of a full-time housewife and the Japanese phrase 'a good wife and wise mother' first appeared in Korea. The training of good wives and wise mothers through female education was a key to entering the civilized world (Daehan maeil sinbo, May 9, 1906). An editorial in *Taegeukhakbo*, which was published in Tokyo by Korean students studying in Japan and played a role in transmitting Japanese modern civilization to Korea, stated more clearly the necessity for educating good wives and wise mothers.

Since ancient times, there have been so many great men. A close study will reveal that nine out of ten of them were nurtured by a mother's education while some are born with talent. Napoleon said the fate of a child depended upon its mother's behavior, the richness and strength of a nation upon its mothers and the spirit, custom, bias, peculiarity, and virtue upon only mothers. I myself experienced and realized the truth.... Therefore, it is needless to state the importance of home education. To complete home education is to rapidly develop education for women who are responsible for home education and nurture good wives and wise mothers. (G. Jang 1906:11-2)

Female education was positively encouraged from the viewpoint that the nurturing and education of children depended upon their mothers. Before children can be civilized, mothers must first be civilized. What was needed was female education. To meet contemporary demand, women should contribute to the national development; thus, the educated and civilized women were actually the good wives and wise mothers. Jang Eung-jin urged that "to have good citizens accomplish their responsibilities and the nation develop rich and strong" was a human duty toward society (E. Jang 1906:20). Equally, he urged that the duty of women in society was to be good wives and wise mothers. "There is a vocation to keep house and nurture children. Female education aims for good wives and wise mothers, first of all," and in particular such knowledge of housekeeping, sewing, shelter, clothes, food, sanitation, and taking good care of the aged should be taught (E. Jang 1907:27-28).

An ignorant woman cannot become a good wife and wise mother without education.² Women not only needed modern knowledge of sanitation and education but also food, clothing, and shelter. They had to combine understanding with knowledge that the period demanded in order to accomplish the roles of home administrator, housekeeper, scientific childcare provider, and educational expert. Female education was essential when the woman was in charge of her children's education.

The theory of a good wife and wise mother was maintained in colonial Korea by Joseon intellectuals because the necessity of female education for

2. Women were not wholly responsible for home administration and their children's education during the Joseon period. Home economics belonged to men on the whole and men and women were both responsible for the education of their sons and daughters (Hong 2005).

training good wives and wise mothers was needed to further Korea's national enlightenment. By the 1910s the argument for female education as a way to train good wives and wise mothers became mainstream (Maeil sinbo, September 22, 1910). "Don't neglect the education of a girl who will be a good wife and wise mother and organize a happy and civilized home and don't let her fall into unhappiness" (Jo 1918).

Such good wives and wise mothers were women who were separated from the past and benefited from a new civilization because they received education. While women in the past were contained, living in the main room of a house and having no education, good wives and wise mothers who were educated did away with the relics of the past (Maeil sinbo, July 14, 1918). By being "baptized in the current of the world while throwing away the old and welcoming the new and bathing in a new civilization," women become good wives and wise mothers. In this respect, women assumed an image of the New Woman apart from women in the old days and became a role model of a good wife and wise mother.³

Furthermore, the Japanese Government-General of Joseon formalized the education of a good wife and wise mother during the colonial period. Because the Japanese educational system was established legally in Joseon, the training of 'good wives and wise mothers' became the principal aim and policy for female education. Of course, this derived from the colonial assimilation policy. "We believe the fate of our country depends upon the character of its women. The crowning glory of the Empire will be accomplished when good wives and wise mothers of fine character appear among the new compatriots" (Naruse 1911). Akiyama, who was in charge of education for the Government-General, also made clear the aim of female education, saying "While educating women and supervising them strictly, let them be good wives when married and wise mothers when they became mothers" (Maeil sinbo, February 5, 1915). This allowed the perpetuation of the emotional fusion between Koreans and Japanese by assimilating Korean homes through female education.

The female discourse during the late Joseon period and the 1910s was an argument for the necessity of female education in order to train good wives and wise mothers. Women were asked to serve the country and others through the roles of wife and mother. This was a commonality between colonists and nation-

3. See Hong (1997) for a concrete comparison between a good wife and wise mother and the Confucian image of womanhood.

alists because they recognized the country and people from the viewpoint of Western civilization. And to both parties, good wives and wise mothers, who were born through female education, were the symbol of civilization and a new image of womanhood separated from the old-fashioned women of the past. That is, ‘good wives and wise mothers’ were the beneficiary of modern education and nothing more than new-style women with knowledge necessary to that age.

III. New Woman and Criticism of ‘Good Wife and Wise Mother’

It was during the 1920s that the beneficiary of female education, the new-style woman appeared. However, a group of women appeared that criticized the education of good wives and wise mothers both in writing and action. Women who grew up studying in Japan or received female education were now producers and consumers of a new discourse. With their appearance, a new argument was formed in colonial Korea and the objective of female education, ‘the training of good wives and wise mothers,’ was the core topic of their argument.

Those who criticized the education were new-style women who were liberals or socialists along with male intellectuals. The norms of a good wife and wise mother and the inherent moral norms were criticized. First, the education for good wives and wise mothers was considered a kind of slave education. In the 1914 “Ideal Wives,” Na Hye-seok severely criticized female education for making women slaves (Na Hye-seok 1914). It seemed to Na Hye-seok who regarded Hiratsuka (平塚雷鳥), Yosano (與謝野晶子), and Nora as ideal wives that the education for good wives and wise mothers was nothing more than a slave education for working only for men because there was no education for good husbands and wise fathers. Such a criticism became remarkable in the 1920s and 1930s.

We deny the so-called ideology of a good wife and wise mother and the home-centered theory in which men should work outside and women at home. If a home is not composed of a consensus of the couple including the sons and daughters of adult age, it cannot be the new-age home we desire. Thus, a home can be developed firmly in the midst of love, equality, justice, and freedom. If there is anyone who denies these principles and tries to maintain male absolutism or female absolutism, he won’t build a home in the new age but will destroy it. For this purpose, we

emphasize equalization and democratization of a home. (Donga ilbo, June 23, 1920)

At the same time, socialists also challenged the theory of a good wife and wise mother. While the New Woman practiced her ideology in private love affairs, socialists grasped female problems in relation to the social structure and developed systematic movements based on this theory. Among them, Baek Pa criticized the education for making 'polite slaves.' Supposing women as one of the oppressed groups like laborers and Joseon people under colonial rule, Baek Pa argued that to educate women as polite slaves in the homes of a male-absolutism kingdom was the education for a good wife and wise mother (Baek 1928:162-4). He thought that when women were liberated from this education, real female education would start. Such an argument was a total negation of the female education policy of Japanese imperialism and consequently, a complete negation of the system of colonialism.

Furthermore, socialists' criticism of a good wife and wise mother extended to an attack of capitalism. It was argued that the theory of a good wife and wise mother was morally and custom suitable to capitalism (A. Kim 1932: 20). It was criticized as an educational system which "was produced through a plan and ideal of bourgeois scholars" (I. Sin 1922-23:15) and as "conservatism ignoring the law of social evolution and detaining women into nurturing children as maids and a dangerous ideology that trampled on women's characters and harmed the growth of children" (Jeoksosaeng 1922: 19). The socialist Park Won-hui stated that female education made women instruments and goods in order to assimilate Joseon into Japan (Donga ilbo, July 8, 1927). It was "a fancy and self-deceit far from the reality of life to force working class women striving for their livelihood to become good wives and wise mothers for the advancement of their position" (E. Kim 1932: 2).

Another argument was the problem of female vocation. Those who criticized female education as being a slave education emphasized that women should accomplish self-realization by taking a job. "As women are educated to be wives and mothers, they are consequently eager to be married. In the case of a lack of a suitable candidate for bridegroom or losing the chance to get married, they usually feel anxious and lonely. But there are many things for women to do besides getting married. First of all, they should be educated as human beings, that is, social constituents rather than as wives and mothers" (Donga ilbo, May 4, 1932).

Third, the theory of free love and new chastity did a great deal of damage to the education for good wives and mothers. The so-called ‘New Woman,’ like Kim Won-ju, Na Hye-seok, and Kim Myeong-sun, insisted upon and practiced freedom from every ideology that bound a woman, trying to overcome the Confucian view of women and the view of a good wife and wise mother. Among them, Kim Won-ju urged women to give up every conventional and conservative old-fashioned ideology through her ‘declaration of new-style women.’ In that her theory of free love justified even the love of married men, it was hard to be socially accepted. New-style women expressed the problem of the equality of the sexes through their theories of free love and new chastity. Moreover, expressing their opinion and the corresponding activities revealed the problem of sexuality that had been taboo until then.

Fourth, from the national point of view, the education for a good wife and wise mother was an education of colonialism. “It is an education practiced and advocated in Japan and Joseon” (Donga ilbo, November 13, 1922). “When women are free from the model of a good wife and wise mother, the Korean Peninsula will be free as well. Women should be liberated from the ideology of maid-servants without payment” (Donga ilbo, August 17, 1920) In short, the education of a good wife and wise mother was nothing more than an education for Japanese colonization.

There have been four criticisms about the education for a good wife and wise mother. They were slave education, advancement of women into society, the problem of love and chastity, and colonial education. But there were also advocates for the education of a good wife and wise mother.

IV. Development of the Theory of ‘A Good Wife and Wise Mother’

Advocates for the education of a good wife and wise mother developed counter theories and coped positively with criticism during the 1920s and 1930s (Hong 1997). First, a good wife and wise mother was not slavery but a duty to society. The unique occupation of women to bring up their children and help their husbands was never a mean service but an important duty for the country and society since women were responsible for raising those who would be in charge of the country’s future.⁴ Moreover, it was maintained that the theory of duty

4. Donga ilbo, April 3, 1920. Lee Il-jeong was the wife of the patriot Lee Jun who was the hero of

between men and women was premised on equal moral relations and ought to be viewed from the standpoint of the equality between the sexes. Another part of this theory was that only equal conjugal relations could compose a complete good wife and wise mother (Park 1934:14-5). The reason was that only when the wife was knowledgeable in conjugal relations could she help her husband his business and lead him in the right direction. Therefore, a wife who was always obedient to her husband wasn't a good wife but a vulgar and pitiable wife.

Second, advocates of the theory of a good wife and wise mother coped with women's advancement into jobs in two ways. One was that the duty of a good wife and wise mother was a calling or vocation from Heaven. Therefore, women who worked went against Heaven's will. Such a theory can be seen in the high school textbook *Susinseo* (Moral Culture) which stated "to take charge of house-keeping as a housewife and bring up children as a mother was an important duty of women" (Japanese Government-General of Joseon 1925:9-11).

Where did this calling given from Heaven derive? It was the biological difference between male and female that had been decided at birth. Men and women differ physiologically and so do their inherent qualities. Therefore, men are generally producers who earn money outside the home while wives are consumers spending at home (Song 1932:36). From the moment a human being is born female, her duty has been decided. 'Maternity' was unique to women and was also a calling to be proud of (Minchonsaeng 1940:76-7).

Moreover, overemphasizing the harmful effects caused by women going to work became a way to arm women with the theory of a good wife and wise mother. For example, women went wrong, were driven by vanity, fell ill, and consequently became barren. Therefore, it was enough for women "to do their responsibility as good wives and wise mothers" (Donga ilbo, February 25, 1936).

However, it was impossible to keep high school educated new-style women from going to work. Women going to work became an irresistible current because women's desire for self-realization through work exploded and women needed to go to work from the standpoint of society.

This caused the advocates of a good wife and wise mother to change their view about women working (Park 2007:213-5). However, it was a partial acceptance and not a total change of their view. First, women should go to work while

King Gojong's secret mission to the Hague and the woman who led the movement to redeem the national debt from Japan; thus, her argument derived from the viewpoint of nationalism.

faithfully playing their role at home (Song 1932:36). If women are not faithful at home, their husbands will be corrupted, their children will not receive a good education, and their homes will fall into darkness.

Second, it is advisable for women to choose jobs suitable to their nature (Japanese Government-General of Joseon 1938:119-24). They could be teachers, nurses, midwives, office ladies, typists, clerks at the department stores, office servants, wet nurses, needlewomen, and kitchen maids.⁵ These were the very jobs introduced by the employment office (Jeong 1940:28). Male intellectuals “who agreed with the ideology of a good wife and wise mother” taught their daughters according to this ideology and made their daughters enter the department of midwifery after graduation from high school in order to provide against emergencies (Park 1940:71). Lee Man-gyu, author of *The History of Korean Education*, also urged that education was best for women’s jobs (Lee 1938:64). In fact, the areas that needed women’s labor were extended and it was necessary to a certain degree to absorb women’s desire to advance into society, which resulted in a partial acceptance of women getting jobs.⁶

Third, the acceptance of free love as a process of marriage and affectionate conjugal relations were positively accepted (Kim 2005:352). The recognition that a marriage with love could constitute a ‘sweet home’ spread widely.⁷ That is, the children born of a marriage of love and the home based on such love could make a woman a good wife and wise mother. This idea was also the desire of the educated new-style women (Ju 1933:32-4).

The phenomenon of pursuing marriage through free love influenced the view of chastity to a certain degree. This extended to the view of chastity between married couples and the concept of monogamy. The chastity of both a married woman and a married man was important (Maeil sinbo, November 20, 1927), and to realize ‘the equality of the view of chastity and duty,’ a love marriage was

5. In the latter half of the 1920s and at the turn of the 1930s, the term “career woman” was a familiar expression. It was at that time that the word ‘girl’ was attached to women’s jobs like department-girl and café-girl (Kim 2004:366).

6. Such a discourse on jobs appealed to women at the time. A 1939 *Donga ilbo* article titled “The intention of young ladies shown in the examinations for entering the upper schools” stated the number of applicants for women’s junior colleges and other colleges of the same degree. Vocational education was limited to teachers and nurses, jobs considered suitable for women, and the opportunity for women to advance into jobs was still rare (*Donga ilbo*, April 6, 1939).

7. Love for love’s sake, which reached its climax during the 1920s, was dependent on personal choice. This enabled the affection of a married couple to be used as an image of merchandise (Kim 2006:276).

urged (Maeil sinbo, August 12, 1926). It seemed that only a marriage based on the affection of a man and a woman could remain chaste. Also, this view of chastity didn't prohibit a woman from remarrying after her husband's death or divorce. Since the view of chastity was based on sexual equality, it was urged that "the equality of the view of chastity between men and women" should be realized (Maeil sinbo, August 12, 1926).

Fourth, it was raised as a way of independence, that is, from the viewpoint of nationalism. Heo Yeong-suk paid attention to the role of a good wife and wise mother from the viewpoint of national improvement, development, and independence. She said that in order to be a powerful nation, "each man and woman, constituents of the people of Joseon, should be powerful."⁸

Ultimately the key to the rise and fall of Joseon was the power of the mother (Donga ilbo, October 18, 1925). Regarding 'national characteristics,' mothers had the following three traits. First, a mother was a creator of new national characteristics. It was the mother that abandoned the evil customs of the nation and created new customs. She argued that the nation could be developed by dint of nurturing children with virtuous customs. Second, the mother was the holder of national characteristics. It was the mother that maintained and embodied everlasting and unique national ways of life, system, etiquette, and the national spirit that was melted among them. Third, it was the mother who transmitted the national characteristics embodied in her to her descendants. That is, the mother was the transmitter of national characteristics.

Saying that "just as a Joseon woman has a defect, so has Joseon," Lee Eun-sang declared that the defect of the Joseon people derived from that of a woman of Joseon. He argued that the future and fate of the whole nation depended upon the hands of women. He described woman as 'mother of the nation' by using the phrases "maternity of the people of Joseon" and "woman of Joseon as mother of Joseon" (Lee 1925:5-6). That is, a mother was the one who guaranteed the future of the nation since she was the creator of new national characteristics and the holder of unique national characteristics, and she took charge of transmitting this national spirit to her descendants.

8. Donga ilbo, August 28, 1925. Heo Yeong-suk was the wife of the national reformist Lee Gwang-su. She was a doctor, a typical New Woman, and a supporter of the theory of a good wife and wise mother. Her writing was serialized in *Donga ilbo* between August 28 and October 9, 1925. She recognized that "it is essential that mothers who are fully responsible for the education of their children have the knowledge necessary to educate children."

V. 'Traditional' Representation of the Theory of a Good Wife and Wise Mother

The intention of new-style women to follow Western trends became a social problem and challenged the educational policy of Japanese. The theories of free love and new chastity posed the danger of splitting society, and socialism aimed for the independence of Joseon and the liberation of its classes. At the same time, from the viewpoint of nationalism, they became an eyesore considering the training to the national constituents of next generation. Accordingly, the advocates of the theory of a good wife and wise mother developed a counter theory to the criticisms by the New Woman. While emphasizing the gender norm of a good wife and wise mother, they were able to make the 'New Woman' into an image of an evil woman.

First, the New Woman was a synonym for vanity and extravagance. In the June and July 1925 issues of *Sinyeoseong* (New Woman), Joseon intellectuals regarded gaiety and activity by new-style women as a positive and vanity as the biggest negative (*Sinyeoseong* June 7, 1925).

Nowadays, most of the women are full of vanity and frivolity. It can be seen in new-style women more often than in old-fashioned women. About what are those gay ornaments, extravagance of belongings, and high quality of habiliments? What a confusion and complexity of their daily life? Idleness and recreation lead them to license. Therefore, walking, concerts, and the cinema become traditions in their lives. To make matters worse, they don't care about home and family and are absorbed in honor and disgrace and vanity without compunction. (Jeong 1929:134)

"Full of vanity with a short skirt and high-heeled shoes on," (Joseonjung-ang ilbo, January 10, 1936), the new women who enjoy extravagance and idleness "squeeze money from their fathers, brothers, or lovers in order to lead a gorgeous life." Since "most of the new women of today" squeeze "the price of men's efforts," they are "worth being called 'woman thieves'" and are actually "frivolous animals" (Palbongsanin 1925:63-4). "New-style women strut down a street with a bunch of hair like a small ball on the back of the head. How impudent and proud they are!" (*Samcheolli* 1938:135). The new-style women who had the admiration of the youth fell to the object of contempt (Kim 2005:271).

The second argument identified them with prostitutes as they enjoyed

thoughtless love affairs. The New Woman images that Joseon intellectuals had were: “They give out a female scent,” “enjoy love affairs like a game,” and “indulged in shallow attraction, they are eager for sexual experiences rather than the development of physical beauty.” There were some lamenting expressions like their love affairs “enjoy idleness and don’t have strict morality,” (*Sinyeoseong* 1925:39-40) “they don’t think of ethical significance in sensual relations” and “they are none other than prostitutes!” Moreover, “as even women of good families imitate prostitutes,” (*Maeil sinbo*, March 25, 1915) the new women of today cannot be distinguished from “girl students, wives, prostitutes and evil women let alone girl students, wives, and office girls” (*Jeong* 1929:134).

The third resulted in a theory that the New Woman didn’t have the will to keep house and was unable to manage a household well. To be bad at house-keeping was one of the faults of a New Woman: “Visiting a home of a New Woman, everything is in disorder and the new housewife is very wasteful” (*Sinyeoseong* 1925:43). Moreover, there was a rumor in everyone’s mouth, “Those of a new-style home eat two bowls of *selleongtang* a day” (*Park* 1929:27). “With badly seasoned *kimchi* and *kkakdugi* and *kanzume-can*” on the table, the best food served is so-called ‘*sukiyaki*’ that was cooked with old beef bought from a peddler, onion, and Japanese soy sauce.” (*Park* 1929:29) Therefore, it was the home life of a New Woman that was wasteful and vulgar. “The new-style women of Joseon have a great fault that they are neglectful of home life” and they had “no will to be good wives and wise mothers and make a peaceful home” (*Ham* 1937:17-8).

Related to this dispute, the article, “Has the New Woman ever cooked rice and made clothes for her husband?” in the July 1931 issue of *Samcheolli* attracted attention.⁹ The participants were typical new-style women from Gyeongseong (Seoul) and some male intellectuals who made a home with new-style women. There were cases where some new-style women who were busy with business employed a maid, but usually the new-style women cooked rice and made clothes. Nevertheless, such contents became a new item. It might be a

9. Joining in this dispute were: Kim Il-yeop, Heo Yeong-suk, Hwang Sin-deok, Park Gyeong-hui, *Donga ilbo* reporter Choe Ui-sun, Ahn Jeong-ok, Sim Eun-suk and along with husbands of new-style women like Kim Gyeong-jae (crusader), Kim Heong-won (editor-in-chief of *Jungoe ilbo*), Choe Yong-hwan (reporter of *Donga ilbo*), and Jeong Seok-tae (director of Jiseong Hospital) (*Samcheolli* 1931:78-80).

counterevidence of the fact that the discourse on the 'New Woman' at that time was not so much a reflection of reality as something nearer to fiction.

Fourth, those new-style women were becoming a symbol of 'the modern sick' who blindly followed Western styles. New-style women meant those who pursued Western style insensibly while making themselves up in a foreign style and having their hair permed. Moreover, social criticism against the consumer culture symbolized by new-style women was awful. The criticism was followed by a criticism about modernism prevailing in the world.

The whole world is flooded with the word 'modern'...modern girl, modern boy, modern minister, modern prince, modern philosophy, modern religion, modern arts... modern love affair, modern architecture, modern shop, modern prostitute. ...Modernism is a part of the consuming classes' cultural lifestyle that appeared in this world based on Americanism...The culture of modernism is that of a transitional period. On the whole, the epicures are psychos and invalids incidental to civilization and who are also sexual perverts. While foreign modernism can be called morbid, that of Joseon can be called deformed. ...Remember how hungry the modern boys and modern girls of Joseon are in comparison with foreign boys and girls. (Im 1930:139-40)

While those that pursued modernism in the United States were described as psychos, the modern girls and boys of colonial Joseon were considered deformed beyond morbid. Antipathy toward Western culture and American culture was revealed. Saying "It doesn't matter about not wearing white shoes in summer or strange skirts like snake-skin. It isn't necessary to stride along the streets of Gyeongseong like a homemade Yankee couple day and night," people were urged to reject "modern frivolous materialism" and "the consuming culture of Yankee" (Lim 1932:37).

The fashion of modernism evoked a nostalgia for 'tradition' at the same time. Rather, trying to find "the shadow of tradition" and "the unified beauty" among them showed the nostalgia for 'ours.' Thus, it was regrettably considered that "our noble and profound etiquette of Joseon" was disappearing gradually while overwhelmed by foreign culture. Moreover, it was denounced that the New Woman who fell into foreign fashion thought the etiquette of Joseon was observed by old-fashioned women, didn't try to learn it, and were not interested in it from the start (Heo 1935:52-3).

Therefore, it was urged that by driving out the egoistic consciousness from Western culture and the humiliation and oppression from Oriental womanly virtues, it was essential to come back to Oriental tradition, particularly teachings of our ancestors, and encourage a new culture for Joseon women (O. Kim 1940). Hong Jong-in, manager of the social department of the magazine *Yeoseong*, also urged that today's female education, above all, needed "beautiful conventional tradition and culture" (*Yeoseong* 1939:24). This was the very reason "those who respected tradition adhered to the theory of a good wife and wise mother" and (N. Kim 1932: 11). That is, respecting "inherent sexual discrimination," "the class distinction embodied from the sexual discrimination" should be eradicated. This was the reason the theory of a good wife and wise mother was prescribed as "an ideal female morality" (N. Kim 1932:9-11). Here, a good wife and wise mother understood modern civilization, became an enlightened women, but had the look of a "traditional women" of Joseon.

The process of redefining a good wife and wise mother as 'traditional' female morality was followed by an effort to determine the image of a good wife and wise mother 'in the past' and make it a model. While emphasizing the maternal role in educating sons again, a search began for a typical model for educating sons in traditional society. In 1931, *Donga ilbo* published models of foreign mothers in the series "The Power of Mothers" and serialized "The Models of Joseon Mothers." It was said that 'the power of mothers was great' (*Donga ilbo*, June 23, 1939). Among them, Sin-saimdang was the supreme leader who realized such an image of womanhood. Sin-saimdang as both a mother and a wife was a great example of a good wife and wise mother (Sin 1939:78-9). Through this process, the model of a good wife and wise mother was being made using a traditional image of womanhood.

VI. Conclusion

This paper was about the process and cause of the new theory of womanhood, a good wife and wise mother, which appeared at the end of the Joseon period and was restructured as a traditional image of womanhood during the colonial period. The research focused on the discourse on the New Woman that appeared during the 1920s and 1930s. The development of the theory of womanhood as a good wife and wise mother, which centered on the traditional image of womanhood, was closely connected with the appearance of the New Woman. At the

same time, this paper revealed that nationalism, colonialism, and the political situation of the colony affected the theory of a good wife and wise mother.

The enlightened intellectuals at the end of the Joseon period and the early colonial period emphasized the need for female education above all to foster national power. Female education was necessary so that the civilized women could educate her children who would likely lead the next generation. Accordingly, women were asked to be reborn as good wives and wise mothers who learned and took lessons in modern knowledge. Then the theory of a good wife and wise mother appeared together with the theory of female education, and a new image of womanhood was expressed. Women were asked to display their abilities through maternity as members of the country and the people. This was common to both colonialists and nationalists because they were both conscious of the country and the people based on the theory of Western civilization. The education for a good wife and wise mother was a common denominator constituting the political theory of the 'nation' of Joseon and the 'empire' of Japan which ran in opposite directions.

However, the group of new-style women born through female education didn't always meet their demand. On the contrary, they criticized the theory of a good wife and wise mother and worked to produce a new discourse. In reality, women called 'New Woman' cried loudly for freedom and equality and emphasized the liberation from patriarchy. In particular, the activities and ideologies of Kim Il-yeop and Na Hye-seok expressed this point strongly in light of love affairs and marriage. The views of love, chastity, and marriage by new-style women and their corresponding activities revealed the problem of women's sexuality.

Here, the advocates of the theory of a good wife and wise mother countered the criticisms of the new-style women. The New Woman who attacked patriarchy and expressed sexuality openly was an awkward being unsuitable to the authority of the colonial state and the intellectuals of colonial Joseon. They confronted each other from the aspect that the former was concerned about the colonial policy on women and the latter was disturbing the national traditions of Joseon. Each of them was developing its own theory about a good wife and wise mother, producing a new target called 'New Woman' and coping with them antagonistically.

The discourse on a good wife and wise mother went through a process of transformation. It was reproduced as a traditional image of mother rather than a new image of womanhood. While the role of homes and women was empha-

sized as a holder of nationality, a good wife and wise mother came to assume the aspect of being united with tradition. After all, the discourse on the New Woman during the colonial period assumed a complicated dual character as it gave a blow to the then dominant female discourse. The theory of a good wife and wise mother eventually reproduce itself in the form of tradition. Such an image of womanhood resembles the aspect that 'modern' society mobilized cultural resources scattered in the past and established 'tradition.' That is, it was in the process of modernization that 'tradition' was being established.

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