THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE CITY:
A SPATIAL ECONOMY OF THE NEW VILLAGE MOVEMENT IN
1970s SOUTH KOREA

by

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Abstract

This study looks into the transformation of farmers’ living spaces during the period of rapid industrialization in 1970s South Korea. Under the name of the New Village Movement, the Park Chung Hee government conducted diverse reconstruction and renovation projects to alter the residential environment of rural areas. While delving deeply into this specific event and period in Korean history, the main focus of this study is not fixed on the New Village Movement itself, nor on a particular person or agrarian policy. The purpose of this study is to capture the dynamics and relationships between capital and living spaces in the detailed historical context of the New Village Movement. This project of examination is further guided by the overarching argument that the reconfiguration process of farmers’ daily living spaces played a central role in renewing and reconfiguring unequal exchange relationships between the countryside and the city, thereby assisting the growth of manufacturing capital.

Chapter 1 focuses on South Korean Land Reform in 1950 and its concomitant agro-economic conditions in the 1950s and 1960s, which explained farmers’ post-war poverty and industrial demand for rural reformation. The subsequent chapters of this study trace the rural New Village
Movement of the 1970s and its focus on roof replacement (Chapter 2), house construction (Chapter 3), interior designing (Chapter 4), and village relocation (Chapter 5). Each chapter also pays close attention to the process by which the new rural spaces under transformation were filled with particular commodities such as slate, cement, televisions, and rice. Small-landed farmers, growing industrial capital, and the developmentalist state reflected their different desires and expectations respectively through the new rural spaces and commodities. Tracking all those dynamics, this study emphasizes the centrality of exchange relationship between agriculture and manufacturing or between the countryside and the city in understanding the historicity of the New Village Movement.
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Introduction

A Rwandan New Village Movement

In the summer of 2013, a Korean newspaper reporter traveling in the central African nation of Rwanda stopped at a local farmhouse for a visit. “There was not even a piece of furniture in the home,” the journalist wrote, “Even in broad daylight it was dark inside, because there was no electricity. On the bare floor of the adobe house, only worn and dirty blankets were laid about carelessly.” Scanning these indicators of Rwandan poverty, the reporter’s eyes soon settled on a certificate hanging on the wall. The document referred in name to the owner of the house who had visited South Korea several months before to complete a leadership training program for what is called the New Village Movement (Saema’il Undong). The village had just initiated a version of this rural modernization program with the personnel and financial assistance of the Korean government. For the reporter, this visit was meant to be part of a feature article about how the Movement had begun to change the small village and thereby discover the potential of Rwanda’s economic growth. In this feature article, the Saema’il certificate in the poor farmhouse was a simple link that introduced the South Korean government’s effort to promote the global version of the New Village Movement in overseas countries as a part of its Official Development Aid (ODA).

The New Village Movement, the main topic of this study, was officially launched by the South Korean state in 1970. Originally the project was purposed to level the income disparities in rural villages that continued to lag behind the cities during this period of rapid industrialization and economic growth. The Movement was able to justify its initiation and urge a broad participation of farmers by highlighting a spatio-visual image of rural poverty, which contrasted the ‘backward’ status of the countryside with urban wealth. Under the slogan of rural modernization, the Movement thus first undertook wide-ranging construction projects focused on roofs, houses, electricity, indoor space, accessory buildings, roads, and village layout. Four decades after its domestic initiation, the Korean government intended to export the New Village Movement, its national program for rural development, to the so-called underdeveloped countries of the world. Maintaining the same programs and promises, the Movement appeared again in partnership with the spatial representation of backwardness, a dynamic that is captured in the implicit comparison between underdeveloped Rwanda and developed Korea projected in the journalist’s account.

The Global New Village Movement has come to reflect South Korea’s desire for aggrandizement in the neoliberal world market. Not only has the government of Korea announced its intent to develop the Movement into Korea’s “nation brand,” it has suggested the Movement as an “international model” for the UN’s development program. The use of such
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market-driven jargon as brand, model, and development provides enough of a hint about the intention and direction of the Global New Village Movement. Yet, the intrinsic nature of the Movement was already on display through the entry of KT (Korea Telecom) Corporation’s capital into the Rwandan communication market in 2013.

Confronted by cut-throat competition in a zero-sum domestic market, Korean telecommunication providers have long sought ways to enter overseas markets. Africa in particular has drawn their interest, as one of the last potential markets that global capital has not yet completely occupied.4 Since the late 2000s, KT, one of the major Korean telecommunication corporations, has made a particular effort to enter the Rwandan market.5 In 2013, this strategy culminated in the signing of a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the government of Rwanda to build the nation-wide 4G LTE (Fourth Generation Long Term Evolution) networks with a cash injection of around $140 million.6 By this agreement, KT obtained exclusive rights


4 “Pap an mŏgŏdo hyude chŏnhwa nunn mot kkŭnŏ… Kŏmŭn taeryuk, ICT sindaeryuk ŭro pusang” [Africans can go without food but not without their cell phones… The dark continent emerging as the ICT new continent], Sŏul sinmun 11 November 2013.


6 “KT, Kŏmŭn taeryuk e ICT Saemaül Undong’ chŏnp’a handa” [KT spreading the ‘ICT New Village Movement’ into the dark continent], Tonga ilbo 28 October 2013; “Rŭwanda e 4G t’ongsinmang kuch’uk, Kaedoguk palchŏn model ro” [Construction of the 4G networks in Rwanda, A development model for developing countries], Tonga
to provide wholesale LTE infrastructure services in Rwanda for 25 years. Under a sub headline entitled, “KT Builds Africa’s IT (Information Technology) Highway,” a Korean newspaper analysed the background of the KT’s business success, saying, “KT was in a more advantageous position in that Paul Kagame, Rwanda’s President, respects the former President Park Chung Hee who accomplished the hyper-speed economic growth of South Korea. Here and there in Rwanda, many villages still conduct the New Village Movement, hanging the national flag of Korea.” KT’s business case in Rwanda seemed to instruct how the New Village Movement could function as a national brand in the global ‘development market’ for the profit of domestic industry.

In 2013, the New Village was the site for the Korean state and corporations to fight together for the expansion into international markets. At a meeting with the Korean press held that year, KT announced that their new business vision was to spread Korea’s successful experience of the New Village Movement through the African version of ICT (Information & Communication Technology) New Village Movement. The company’s stated business vision sounded somewhat ambiguous before more outspoken voices, declared that, “Rwanda will...
become our bridgehead for entering the African market, a blue ocean,”9 or “We plan to establish our base in Rwanda and expand our business to the whole region of the continent.”10 To spread the New Village Movement ultimately meant to expand their market.

It was in small villages where the Rwandan New Village Movement took place, and it was the villagers who led and continued the Movement at each construction site. However, as revealed in the above dynamics surrounding the global market, the Movement was not only the local residents’ village construction program, but more importantly a capitalist market project to meet the demand of diverse subjects – both the states of Rwanda and Korea, the KT Corporation, and local villagers. As I show through the following chapters, the New Village Movement in 1970s South Korea was not much different from the Rwanda version four decades later. Throughout the 1970s in Korea, farmers’ new homes and villages became the place where market dynamics among the state, capital, and farmers negotiated and imposed their different expectations for the emerging rural market in daily life.

Citing Rwanda to introduce the 1970s Korean New Village Movement is not meant to simply highlight the commonalities in the rhetoric and titles surrounding the new village program, much less to reproduce a discourse that asserts Rwanda is following in the footsteps of Korea. Rather, the case of Rwanda enunciated the centrality of capital and market in understanding the context of the Movement. The parallels between the two New Village Movements in Rwanda and Korea are highlighted here only because this study attempts to directly focus on the issues of the capitalist market and exchange relationships surrounding the

9 “‘Rŏwanda Saemaǔl Undong LTE sokdo ro p’ŏjil kŏt,’ Yi Sŏk-ch’ae KT hoejang kija kandamhoe” [Yi Sŏk-ch’ae, KT’s chairman, says at a meeting with media, “Rwandan New Village Movement will spread with the speed of LTE”], Tonga ilbo 31 October 2013.
program, rather than to trace simply what the state speaks under the name of the New Village Movement.

This study examines in detail the rural New Village Movement of South Korea during the 1970s. However, this project does not simply aim to explain agrarian problems at particular local areas in the Korean peninsula or to position a specific period in the historiography of Korean economy. My intent is for this study to be read as a historical narrative on the political economy of space – how the rearrangement of space maintains and reinforces unequal exchange relationships in the market. To this end, this study attempts to avoid fixating on the New Village Movement as a rural movement exclusively between the government and farmers, and illustrates the New Village Movement through the lens of the capitalist exchange relationship between the city and the countryside as well as between manufacturing and agriculture.

The Political Economy of the New Village Movement

A name often conceals within it a politics of origin and ownership. The New Village Movement (Saemaũl Undong) was officially named and initiated by Park Chung Hee in 1970. Throughout the 1970s, Park exercised the exclusive ownership of the Movement through an unrivalled mobilization of administrative and financial power. A tremendous top-down system of control developed around the Movement infiltrating the smallest rural villages – 15 to 22 ministers or vice-ministers composed the Saemaũl Central Council, each level of local government made up Saemaũl Promotion Councils, and every rural village organized Village Development
The state’s financial loans, investments, and payments to the agricultural sector were categorized and executed in the name of the New Village budget. The supreme commander of this titanic linear system was Park Chung Hee, who exercised authority over even the finest details of the process with acute interest. The Movement was conducted most vigorously in the 1970s until the death of Park in 1979, but continued to remain and evolve up until the present, becoming a constant reminder of the Park Chung Hee regime to contemporary South Koreans.

Thus, as countless volumes of government and quasi-official sources demonstrate, studies that focus on what was called the New Village Movement itself tend to conclude with only Park Chung Hee’s leadership and the regime’s efforts at developing agrarian modernization policies. Even relatively critical studies dealing with the New Village Movement tend to adhere to the evaluation of the Park Chung Hee military dictatorship in terms of the state’s nondemocratic coercion and socio-economic inequity. However, the main aim of this study is not to evaluate the rights and wrongs of Park Chung Hee and the authoritarian state, nor does it intend to further entrench the personality cult that has developed around the man. This study instead focuses on various relationships hidden behind the title of the New Village Movement – unequal exchanges between agriculture and manufacturing or the rural and the urban as well as

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the dynamics among the manufacturing capital, state, and farmers. This study also examines the socio-economic context of the Movement from a longer historical perspective, not reducing it only to the issues of a particular regime’s political leadership or rural policy. By doing so, this study ultimately attempts to elicit a more fundamental narrative that deals with the capitalist relationships surrounding space, while remaining firmly rooted in the concrete historical context of Korea’s post-war industrialization period.

The political economy of the New Village Movement suggests how the reconfiguration of living space was central to maintaining and strengthening the unequal exchange relationships needed for the constant operation of a capitalist market. The core projects of the New Village Movement were first to renovate, rebuild, and rearrange farmers’ residential space under the slogan of rural modernization. Through large-scale reconstruction projects, manufacturers of construction materials were able to secure new domestic markets in the countryside and an exit from the crisis of accumulation that some manufactures found themselves in at the time. This was particularly apparent in the South Korean cement industry which, since the late 1960s, had been a sector of heated competition over an increasingly saturated urban market. The spatial orientation of the new empty home also occupies an important part in this study. The New Village Movement cast interior space as daily showrooms where commodities, especially electronic appliances, were placed on display. This use of space had the effect of broadening farmers’ consumer desire; Samsung Electronics, one of the representative transnational corporations, established its initial consumer basis in the rural market at this time. In their larger concrete houses equipped with electricity, farmers were no longer self-sufficient farm producers. They were now ‘sincere’ debtors who took long-term loans from financial institutes to build and fill their new homes and, in turn, became obliged to work to repay their debts.
In order to make farmers occupy such an active role in the market, the state’s New Village Movement adopted a thorough spatio-visual strategy. Arguing for the necessity of reconstruction, the Movement emphasized and reproduced a universal form of binary images and discourses between the wealthy city and the destitute countryside, alluding to the unbridgeable and thus independent existence of these two sectors. However, there had always been exchanges between urban manufacturing and rural agriculture, and the so-called urban wealth was reliant on extracted farmers’ capital from the agricultural sector especially throughout the 1950s and 60s. This unequal exchange relationship was concealed behind the presented images of wealth and poverty. More importantly, the diametrically contrasting representation of the countryside and the city placed the blame for so-called agricultural “unproductivity” and “negligence” on the shoulders of the rural population, and thereby called for farmers’ “diligence (Kŭnmyŏn), self-help (Chajo), and cooperation (Hyŏptong)” – the mottos of the New Village Movement, which ultimately required farmers to devote their own labour power and funds to construction projects.

In the end, with the newly constructed urban-style houses and villages, the countryside and the city seemed to achieve a sort of spatial homogenization. Yet, it was precisely inside the ‘homogenized’ new homes that farmers seriously considered abandoning their land and moving into the city; they worried about the relatively low price of rice and their unaffordable loans for the so-called cultural houses and brand-new consumer products. Meanwhile, newspapers celebrated the renewal of the record in national export growth every year, and highways under construction accelerated the transport of cheap rice and labour from the countryside to the industrial cities, reinforcing the same spatial hierarchy that the New Village Movement was meant to address. In this way, unevenness always took place at the very moment and position of homogenization for the continuation and growth of capital.
Put differently, this study discusses the process of capital’s infiltration into domestic space, which was strategically accompanied by the dichotomous visual representation, homogenization, and re-differentiation of that space. In reaching these arguments and perspectives, this study necessarily touches on important politico-economic themes such as the post-war accumulation of industrial capital, relationships between the sectors of manufacturing and agriculture, the state’s planning, intervention, and financing in this process, as well as the circulation of production, distribution, and consumption surrounding goods and labour power. As a number of studies have shown, these topics are deeply involved with different attempts to explain the cause of the so-called late industrializer’s successful catch-up, or going even further with polemic debates over the historical origin of such a rapid ‘capitalist development.’ However, what interests me in this study is somewhat distant from these explanations or debates. Nevertheless, through the analytical process of dealing with the aforementioned political economic themes, this study returns and responds to the age-old historiographical questions of socio-economic background for the growth of South Korea’s export-oriented industries in the 1970s and its historical context.


This study responds to the questions of causation and origin in narratives of development in South Korea by illuminating how the extracted capital from financially subordinated farmers and agricultural sectors contributed to the manufacturing-centred growth of national economy from the 1950s to the 1970s. However, my approach to such questions converges on the ultimate interest of this study: capitalist penetration into everyday life. Rather than focus on what can be explicitly simplified as exploitation and accumulation, the following chapters pay more attention to the diverse cultural strategies of capital and capitalist desire that enabled such an unequal exchange or extraction. Capitalism is hegemonic because it permeates our everydayness, consciousness, and unconsciousness, not simply due to the fact that its mode of existence stands on exploitative relationships.

This study understands domestic living space and the village as core routes where such a capitalist infiltration into everyday life takes place. The focus of each chapter is oriented towards specific features of the new village projects such as roof replacement, house construction, interior space design, village relocation, and interregional highways. These concrete places constituted the rural residential environment where farmers established diverse relationships with different but entangled subjects every day – such as the state’s technocrats and local officials who administratively enforced the construction projects; manufacturers and their products that constructed the buildings and filled the empty indoor places; the agricultural cooperatives and banks who gave long-term loans for the housing and consumer products; urban workers and agro-markets whose demand was attained through the network of the new rural roads and expanding highways; and fellow farmers who revealed their aspiration and mutual competition for brand-new commodities inside their new homes, making material-cultural dynamics among themselves.
Readings of the New Village Movement

Readers with different interests and backgrounds will find through such multilayered relationships different ways to read the South Korean New Village Movement. For those who are too familiar with the controversy over economic development versus socio-political oppression surrounding the Park Chung Hee regime and the New Village Movement, this study instead offers to consider the concrete material context beyond the totalitarian slogans of spiritual values and developmentalist discourses of modernization permeating the 1970s New Village Movement. At the same time, this study suggests paying close attention to a longer agro-economic historicity entwined with the growth of manufacturing capital. The following chapters assert the need to approach the topic of 1970s rural problems in the structural context of the post-war Land Reform system since 1950, as well as the updated exchange conditions between the rapidly expanding manufacturing industry and representationally stagnant agriculture sector especially since the late 1960s.

Some who are particularly concerned about the functions of visual image in capitalist relationships may concentrate more on my contention that the New Village Movement relied on a thorough spatio-visual strategy. Various forms of media, government publications, and even farmers themselves widely spread and reproduced a classic type of dichotomous images between the destitute countryside full of grass-roof houses and the wealthy city of skyscrapers, especially

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when the income disparity and rural exodus began to accelerate in the mid-1960s. To emphasize such an ‘unbridgeable’ disconnection concealed the constant exchange relationship between the countryside and the city, which had long provided nourishment for the post-war accumulation of manufacturing capital. However, the purpose of this capitalist image strategy did not just lie in the concealment of the unequal exchange relationship, but also in strengthening of it. A plethora of such contrasting spatio-visual representations on the rural and the urban justified the need for ‘rural modernization,’ which was synthesized into the New Village Movement in the 1970s. New space brought into being through the various construction projects encouraged farmers, in turn, to become earnest consumers in the rapidly expanding and increasingly uneven market of the period.

The state also made use of various aesthetic politics to help disseminate rural work projects among farmers. For a better and wider visibility, the local officials highlighted new slated-roofs garishly painted with primary colours, prioritizing for remodelling the highly ‘visible’ farm houses standing near highways. In this way, farmers’ roofs literally became part of a national ‘canvas’ with the highways fulfilling the role of exhibition routes. The military regime colourfully propagated rural development and visually manifested political legitimacy toward passers-by, tourists, and farming residents alike. Towards this end, the state attempted to control even the individual farming household’s choice of roof colour shades and the direction the houses faced.

For readers interested primarily in the concerns of the peasants, this study shows the contradictory position farmers found themselves in, driven by strong consumer desire shaped by their everyday space. This feature of the farmers stands in sharp contrast to descriptions of them
as a well-organized class resisting the state’s coercion and capital’s exploitation. Farmers at the
time developed fundamental capitalist fear that, in the end, all of their private properties could be
taken away by the Agricultural Cooperatives that had provided the large loans needed for the
construction of new homes. Ironically, when they determined what size house to build, most of
the farmers preferred larger ones despite the corresponding increase of debts, even going so far
as to elaborate on the government’s standardized cost-reducing blueprints. Farmers’ debts
deepened further following the completion of construction. Rural villagers often gathered to look
around their neighbours’ new homes, where brand new electronic appliances and trendy furniture
decorated interior spaces. Well-decorated homes became models to emulate among the villagers,
stimulating consumer demand in the countryside. In particular, a television set was the most
popular must-have item that usually occupied the main room. A television was an outwardly
displayed product due to its rising antenna on the roof. Information about who was able to afford
a television, who was not, who was the first to have one, and who was the last was all exposed
on the roofs of rural communities, inciting competition among the villagers. Even for stubborn
farmers who did not intend to spend money on a television at all, resisting their children’s
clamour for one became a common and difficult daily assignment. In such a ubiquitous
atmosphere of consumption, televisions spread among rural households very quickly. The
percentage of farm households with a television set was less than 10% in 1971, but it increased
up to almost 80% by 1979. Television consumption was taken to be a sign of the propagated
wealth of the countryside. Rising antennae on the roofs appeared as the completion of the roof

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18 For scholarly debate on the Park Chung Hee regime and its relationship with the ‘people’ of Korea, see Lee,
improvement project. Needless to say, farmers’ consumer desire was becoming further amplified by their television’s flood of commercials and programming.

The farmers in this study were frequently compelled to work in order to repay their loans for new home construction and make the monthly instalments for new television sets. Farmers’ production was being more deeply subordinated to the state-mediated financial capital that was also mediated through the new domestic space. In the capitalist market where farmers’ consumption and production were directly connected and controlled through institutionalized financial capital, the mode of extracting farmers’ labour and capital was much more sophisticated than in the direct forms of exploitation through, for example, the Land Yield Tax imposed on farmers, which, in the early 1950s, occupied 70 to 90% of the nation’s entire tax revenue. By the 1970s, the dominant mode for the extraction of farmers’ production occurred in the market, where financial capital compelled farmers to exchange their relatively lower-priced agricultural products with higher-priced manufactured goods at a more extensive scale.

The farmers’ subservience to the unequal exchange market was deeply rooted in their own commitment to features of developmentalism and their consumer desire in the places of everyday life. At this juncture, the farmers’ ‘resistance’ could not take the traditional form of a collective peasant movement struggling for the overturn of the exploitative government or a certain exploiting class. As James Scott has shown, the everyday forms of resistance on the part of powerless farmers were somewhat distant from outright and direct confrontation with the state or the authorities. Farmers in this study often complained about the government’s insistent prodding by means of expressing their aesthetic disagreements over the local officials’ unilateral

choice of “ugly” roof colours. In some cases, they intentionally slowed down construction, negotiating with the local government office to receive more subsidies. Farmers’ diverse “tactics” encountered in everyday places did not allow the state’s New Village Movement to proceed as intended.\textsuperscript{20} Farmers in this study often arbitrarily revised the government’s standardized blueprints and created their own house designs to gratify their spatial need and desire. In this sense, as in Stephen Kotkin’s illustration about the process of building Stalinist socialism in the USSR,\textsuperscript{21} the layout of the rural modernization in 1970s South Korea was not the intended consequence of the state and manufacturing capital’s one-sided plans. It was the incessant process and results of farmers’ daily tackling and negotiations with what was called the New Village Movement. Farmers’ everyday practice of ‘resistance,’ which was often intermingled with their contradictory consumer desires, was itself another form of ‘production’ on what the new home and new village should be like or how they should be built.

Finally, readers with interest in the scale of historical narratives may find in this study how effectively microscopic stories can show the different sides that dominant historiographies have not sufficiently explained. A piece of slate, a bag of cement, and a television set can tell us another version of the story about economic growth in South Korea, known as one of late-industrializations. The relationships that these small and concrete commodities made with farmers explain in detail how the manufacturers escaped their accumulation crises by establishing the countryside as a new domestic market and farmers as a growing consumer group. The role of domestic market and farmer-consumers is what mainstream narratives have often ignored while preoccupied with the widely-accepted framework emphasizing heavy chemical


industries and export-oriented development. As the final chapter of this study shows, farmers’ small stories surrounding a new rice variety growing on the local Korean paddy field can also provide us different viewpoints about what the global Cold War was like at the level of daily life during the 1970s. Under the circumstances of the Cold War, when rice production often served as a standard of competition, the South Korean government, with the help of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines, developed a high-yield variety named \textit{T’ongil pyŏ or unification rice}. Established by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, the IRRI operated in part to prevent “developing countries [from] falling into the Communist camp.” \textit{T’ongil}, the rice of global Cold War, literally meant the unification of North and South Koreas in Korean, but it actually intended to unify rural space and time. The single kind of \textit{T’ongil} rice spread quickly all over the countryside, occupying over 70\% of the total national production of rice especially in 1977 and 1978; each farm was managed by the state’s central cultivation calendar because farmers had no experience cultivating the laboratory-born seeds. Under the motto of massive and effective production, the Cold War environment deeply influenced farmers’ daily production activities, right beside the rural consumers’ homes and villages under construction.


Chapter 1
Land and Poverty in the Countryside, 1950-1970

In 1998, two Korean newspaper companies, the *Chosôn ilbo* and *Tonga ilbo*, conducted a public-opinion survey meant to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Korea.¹ This survey asked respondents to comment on the following question: “What do you consider to be the greatest achievements of the South Korean government over the past 50 years?” According to the survey results, almost 50% of the general respondents thought of the “Park Chung Hee government’s New Village Movement (*Saemaul Undong*)” as the highest accomplishment in the history of the republic. In the midst of the frustration experienced from the IMF (International Monetary Fund) debt crisis that started in late 1997, the New Village Movement was particularly remembered and acclaimed as the symbol of the swift economic expansion of the 1970s.

While the economic hardship and consequent nostalgia of the late 1990s contributed to these results, it is worth noting that the survey was not an open opportunity for respondents to voice an opinion. The simple format of survey questions and responses limited the historical events available for respondents to choose from. A further point of interest is that the survey used the expression of “Park Chung Hee government’s New Village Movement,” which confirmed the ownership of the movement. The wording of this question is of little surprise; even the most critical voices against the Park regime have echoed this belief of exclusive ownership in

¹ “Chŏngbu surip 50-yŏn Taehanmin’guk 50-yŏn ŭi 20-tae ópchŏk” [20 achievements of the ROK governments for the past 50 years], *Chosôn ilbo* 16 July 1998; “Chŏngbu surip 50-chunyŏn t’ükpyŏl yǒron chosa” [Special public-opinion survey in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ROK establishment], *Tonga ilbo* 14 August 1998.
the process of explaining the New Village Movement as representative of the military
dictatorship’s undemocratic and exploitative characteristics.

The ordinary people’s everyday experiences of the New Village Movement leave
unlimited room for historical exploration. Yet, this potential is markedly reduced when the
diverse stories and relationships among the participants are confined within the simplified
politics and discourses dedicated to a particular government. The problem becomes even more
serious when it encounters the established assessment that the particular government was a
dictatorial regime led by a person’s charismatic leadership. This combined framework finally
produces a retrogressive narrative fortifying Park Chung Hee’s personality cult, whether it is
based on criticism or not.

Faced with this crisis of historical narrative, the direct voices of participants may
provide useful clues for navigating a way to escape these frames of the personality cult and
statist reductionism. According to a rural village leader in Kyŏnggi Province by the name of Yi
Chae-yŏng, “what was called the New Village Movement was not a new movement. It looked
fresh because the President proclaimed it, but the new village movement had been there before
then.” Yi’s statement asserts that the New Village Movement was not a creation of Park Chung
Hee. Interestingly, similar accounts are widely found in other farmers’ memoirs and documents
regarding the movement. According to such accounts, since the 1950s and 60s, many farmers
had already made efforts to construct public facilities, expand village roads, and increase the
household income for themselves; these spontaneous projects were afterwards synthesized into

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2 Yi Chae-yŏng and Kim Yŏng-mi. 2005. Chinjŏnghan nongmin ŭi hyŏp tong chohap ŭl wihayŏ [For the True
Cooperatives for Farmers]. Kwach’on: Kuksa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe. (p. 143)
3 See the section of ‘successful cases’ in Naemubu [Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1973-1979, Saemaŭl Undong – Sijak
the various features of the New Village Movement in the 1970s. In other words, farmers’ own efforts had existed before Park institutionalized them within a state program. These statements undermine the personality cult expressed under the title “Park Chung Hee’s New Village Movement.” The ordinary farmers now come to appear as the leading characters in the story of the New Village Movement.⁴

However, this subversion does not change the developmentalist perspective that, from the beginning, facilitated narratives like a person’s heroic epic tale or collective nostalgia. The farmers’ real voices rather tend to accentuate and legitimize a kind of ‘spirit of the time,’ in which everyone put effort for the unanimous goal of economic prosperity. In their success stories, the charismatic political leader still appears as an institutional sponsor for self-helping farmers. This representatively ‘harmonious’ rural movement for development does not speak about the complicated relationships or conflicting interests found within it.

Ironically, a clue to capture such an unexposed dynamics is found again in Yi Chae-yŏng’s continued statement, saying; “Agriculture was stagnant, while the other industries and the city were developing. So I anyways believe that President Park took the proper measures [the New Village Movement] at an appropriate moment.”⁵ This statement sounds like a positive evaluation of Park’s timely promotion of the New Village Movement, while Yi still believed that the movement was not a sudden creation by a person and had nothing new in it. Yet, more importantly, his account provides ground where we can approach the New Village Movement from the frame of problems, conflicts, and unevenness instead of consensus and harmony; the

New Village Movement appeared as a solution to the uneven relationship between underdeveloped agriculture and growing manufacturing or between the poor countryside and the prosperous city.

For a deeper understanding of these relationships and a consequential shift of narratives, this chapter will delve into more implicit linkages among the urban manufacturing, the rural agriculture, and the state beyond the explicit discourses and documents that the New Village Movement has pronounced. This chapter will also examine more sustained socioeconomic conditions surrounding the ordinary participants, paying particular attention to the fundamental conditions that had affected farmers’ relative poverty since the liberation of Korea in 1945.

As the first step of this historical investigation, this chapter starts with an examination of the Land Reform conducted in 1950, which established the basic condition of the rural economy in 1950s and 60s South Korea. Land Reform converted most tenant farmers into independent small farm owners, who were supposed to operate as a foundation for capitalist growth in South Korea. When almost everyone came to have a small portion of land, the traditional means of cooperative cultivation, which had supported the large land tenure system and simultaneously peasant solidarity, began to rapidly disappear from rural communities. Tenant farmers attained their long-cherished desires to own land, but their individual farm management was in a precarious state. Disconnected from the landlords’ financial support and organized labour, the small-landed farmers began to suffer from the effects of low household income and the chronic lack of agricultural funds.

This state of affairs brought about a diverse range of discussions regarding the reasons for rural poverty. For the most part, the blame was placed on the incomplete land reform: the
small amount of land that did not secure a sustainable income level and the absence of follow-up measures to systematically support petty farm management. The government’s solution for the problems was to establish the Agricultural Cooperative. However, the final version of the government’s agricultural cooperative in the 1950s could not function properly to solve the agrarian problems due to its lack of fiscal independence. The mainstream economic bureaucrats of the Syngman Rhee government planned postwar rehabilitation and growth by fostering manufacturing industries while controlling inflation through financial contraction particularly in the sector of agriculture. In this manufacturing-centred plan, farmers were only asked to provide cheap grains to support ‘growth through stability,’ not being protected as a part of the whole economy. The dysfunctional Agricultural Cooperative reflected the logic of such hierarchical post-war developmentalism.

The growth of manufacturing in the 1950s was indebted to the transference of capital from a marginalized agricultural sector and alienated farmers. Small landed farmers had to pay the so-called Temporary Land Yield Tax, which was 70 to 90% of the nation’s entire tax revenue in the early 1950s, whereas urban workers and manufacturing capital enjoyed tax benefits. In this sense, it could be said that the Land Reform worked properly by consolidating the postwar capitalist base in South Korea, as it was originally designed. Differentiated grain prices also led to the extraction of farmers’ capital to the manufacturing sector. The price of farmers’ products was relatively lower than that of manufactured commodities in the market. The low grain price contributed to the maintenance of low wage system and the stabilization of inflation, but aggravated the poverty of farm households. The inflow of the U.S. surplus grains worsened the farmers’ situation, but for domestic manufacturers it meant that they were able to secure even cheaper raw materials.
The manufacturing-centred economic strategy and the chronic rural poverty continued throughout the 1960s. This was more clearly expressed in the endemic problems with debt in the countryside. Agrarian problems led to a rural exodus at this time, with the population of farm households dipping below 50% for the first time in 1969. It was in part because of these rapid shifts in population and production that the decline of agriculture sector began to be understood as the problem of manufacturing. Confronting the cut-throat market competition and recession in the urban market especially from the late 1960s, the manufacturing capital began to consider the potential of the rural areas as a new domestic market. Yet, this hope for market expansion into the countryside was diminished by concerns over the collapse of rural economy. Manufacturing capital publicly discussed how to increase household income in the rural areas in order to strengthen farmers’ purchasing power. The state’s economic bureaucrats emphasized the “concurrent development of agriculture and manufacturing” for the continuous growth of manufacturing industries. When the agricultural sector could not support the growth of manufacturing due to the widening urban-rural income gap, both the state and market were compelled to narrow the disparity for the purpose of maintaining the unequal exchange relationship, which had been the source of the growth. It was in this context that the government initiated the New Village Movement under the slogan of rural modernization.

The South Korean Land Reform in 1950

Small Land-owning Farmers

For Korean farmers, the liberation from the Japanese colonial rule in 1945, indeed, had the meaning of emancipation from landlords. From the colonial period, nationalist political leaders
Regardless of capitalist or socialist camps developed a kind of political consensus, to a certain degree, about the need for change in the exploitative colonial landlord-tenant system. This issue of land reform became a core economic agenda in the dynamic Cold War rivalry of 1945 to 1950 which has been called the *Haebang* (liberation) period, receiving broad interest and support especially from tenant farmers in both North and South Korea. It was the North Korean regime that carried out a pre-emptive action on the land ownership system against the southern capitalist regime. North Korea’s Land Reform was a radical policy that took away land from Japanese and Korean large landlords and distributed it to tenant or petty farmers for free. The Syngman Rhee government of South Korea had to pacify by any means farmers who aspired to own their own land, and who desire for land reform only grew as they witnessed the gains enjoyed by farmers on the northern side of the peninsula.

Land reform in Cold War South Korea, however, had to be different from the socialist model of confiscation and distribution. The project had to secure capitalist land ownership principles and convert the landlord’s capital into industrial capital. To this end, the tenant land of large landlords was supposed to be divided into innumerable small farms while the recipients of this land were expected to become solid and widespread supporters of the Rhee regime functioning as independent landowning subjects. When the government promulgated the Law on

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Land Reform in April 1950, Article 1 enunciated the purpose of the law in its clear expression of “the independence of farm household economy.”

The Law on Land Reform stipulated that each farm household could not own agricultural land exceeding 3 hectares (ha). The ownership of farmland was not allowed in the case of those who did not cultivate their own land. The agricultural land which was owned by non-farming household and any land more than 3ha belonging to large landlords became the object of confiscation with compensation. The land compensation price was 150% of a normal crop harvest on the confiscated land, which was much cheaper than market price and furthermore would be redeemed by instalments over five years (30% annually). However, large landlords in the South had already begun preparing for the Land Reform prior to its enactment, learning from the North Korean Land Reform in 1946. They had started to sell their own land before the passage of the Law on Land Reform in 1950. It is estimated that 49.2% of total tenant land in South Korea was sold to farmers before the Land Reform was carried out in each

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village.\textsuperscript{12} In this respect, the Land Reform was not a complete ‘reform,’\textsuperscript{13} but it is evident that a great number of tenant farmers were converted into self-farming independent farmers, taking the direct (distribution) or indirect (sale) opportunity in the process of the Land Reform.

\textless Table 1.1 \textgreater The Shift in Numbers of Farm Households by the Ownership Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Farm Households</th>
<th>Independent Farm Households</th>
<th>Independent &amp; Tenant Farm Households</th>
<th>Tenant Farm Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>2,011 (100.0)</td>
<td>285 (14.2)</td>
<td>716 (35.6)</td>
<td>1,010 (50.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>2,106 (100.0)</td>
<td>358 (17.0)</td>
<td>834 (39.6)</td>
<td>914 (43.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>2,474 (100.0)</td>
<td>925 (37.4)</td>
<td>1,023 (41.4)</td>
<td>526 (21.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>2,184 (100.0)</td>
<td>1,763 (80.7)</td>
<td>336 (15.4)</td>
<td>85 (03.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2,350 (100.0)</td>
<td>1,729 (73.6)</td>
<td>461 (19.6)</td>
<td>160 (06.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2,483 (100.0)</td>
<td>1,651 (66.5)</td>
<td>591 (23.8)</td>
<td>241 (09.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,155 (100.0)</td>
<td>1,205 (55.9)</td>
<td>853 (39.6)</td>
<td>97 (04.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


## Table 1.2: The Shift in Numbers of Farm Households According to the Amount of Farmland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Farm Households</th>
<th>Less than 0.5ha</th>
<th>0.5-1.0ha</th>
<th>1.0-2.0ha</th>
<th>2.0-3.0ha</th>
<th>More than 3.0ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>2,184 (100.0)</td>
<td>933 (42.7)</td>
<td>782 (35.8)</td>
<td>373 (17.1)</td>
<td>93 (4.3)</td>
<td>3 (0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>2,218 (100.0)</td>
<td>954 (43.0)</td>
<td>690 (31.1)</td>
<td>446 (20.1)</td>
<td>122 (5.5)</td>
<td>6 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2,349 (100.0)</td>
<td>1,008 (42.9)</td>
<td>707 (30.1)</td>
<td>486 (20.7)</td>
<td>141 (6.0)</td>
<td>7 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>2,508 (100.0)</td>
<td>901 (35.9)</td>
<td>794 (31.7)</td>
<td>644 (25.7)</td>
<td>140 (5.6)</td>
<td>29 (1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2,410 (100.0)</td>
<td>787 (32.6)</td>
<td>824 (34.2)</td>
<td>639 (26.5)</td>
<td>123 (5.1)</td>
<td>37 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2,285 (100.0)</td>
<td>691 (30.2)</td>
<td>828 (36.2)</td>
<td>618 (27.0)</td>
<td>112 (4.9)</td>
<td>36 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,129 (100.0)</td>
<td>612 (28.8)</td>
<td>748 (35.1)</td>
<td>630 (29.6)</td>
<td>108 (5.1)</td>
<td>31 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: The data regarding total number of farm households can be slightly different from those of Table 1.1. This is because each institute had its own ways of collecting statistics from different sources.

The Land Reform established a large number of economically independent small farm households in agricultural industry, which occupied almost 70% of the total population of South Korea.\(^\text{14}\) Table 1.1 shows how many independent farm households were established since the liberation of Korea in 1945. The percentage of purely independent farm households was 14.2% while tenant farm households reached to 50.2% as of 1945, but this situation was reversed especially in 1951 following the Land Reform. The completely independent farm households occupied 80.7% of the total farm households, while the tenant farm households rapidly decreased

\(^{14}\) According to the official announcement of the Ministry of Agriculture on Dec. 21st 1949, the total number of farmhouses was 2,473,833 and the agricultural population reached 14,416,365 which was about 71% of total population in South Korea. Han'guk nongch'on kyon'gwon [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. 1984. Nongji kaehyoksa kwan'gye charyojip [Historical Materials on the Land Reform]. Vol. 3. Seoul: Han'guk nongch'on kyon'gwon. (p. 23.)
to 3.9%. Contrary to this impressive proliferation of independent farm households, their farming land was not sizable. Table 1.2 shows that 95.6% of the total farm households owned agricultural land of below 2ha and more importantly 42.7% of the total farm households owned land of less than 0.5ha in 1951, which at the time was not enough to cover even the minimum cost of living. Even if the small farm households owning land of less than 0.5ha decreased gradually by giving up farming, they were still over 40% of total farm homesteads in the 1950s and over 30% in the 1960s and 1970s.

**Autonomous but Unsustainable**

Land Reform in South Korea was a process of establishing ‘autonomous’ farm household economies which would serve as the supporters of the South Korean capitalist regime, but they were only ‘unsustainable’ petty farms in terms of agricultural management and financial planning. The reform would not be viable without proper follow-up measures of the law. This intrinsic vulnerability of the South Korean Land Reform was symbolically revealed in the behaviors and dynamics of farmers when the law was enacted in each village.

For example, some scenes of tension among neighbours in the spring of 1951 before the Land Reform at P’ungdŏk Village give a contextual hint of the latent problems of the reform that the farmers had already perceived. P’ungdŏk Village is a small, quiet agricultural community in North Ch’ungch’ŏng Province. In a break from the norm, the tenant farmers in this village had begun to behave more cautiously than usual when they encountered their landlords on the street. It was not a comfortable thing for the landlords to greet their tenants in those days, either. Both the landed and the landless tried to read each other’s face by stealth. In the end, the landlords convened a meeting amongst themselves. A few days later the majority of the village
residents also held a public hearing for tenant farmers only. Almost all the village people participated in one of the two meetings with much concern and curiosity.\(^{15}\)

The reason for this ‘calm fuss’ in P’ungdŏk Village was the preliminary survey for the Land Reform. The Land Reform was originally conducted a year before throughout South Korea, but it was not completed in some areas including P’ungdŏk Village due to the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. When the government resumed the Land Reform, it was expected to bring farmers’ passionate support and cooperation since the project legally guaranteed the transference of large landowners’ farmland to the hands of self-farming and tenant farmers through the means of confiscation with compensation. Yet, the relations between the residents of P’ungdŏk Village raise an interesting question. Why were the small farmers, hesitant in claiming their lawful rights, behaving cautiously? According to the reminiscences of the then village leader, Yi Se-yŏng, repeated efforts were needed to persuade the tenant farmers to participate in the survey process for the Land Reform. He recalled that the tenant farmers were reluctant to pursue the survey voluntarily and expected someone else to respond to it first on behalf of themselves.\(^{16}\) It would be easy to simply conclude that they might have been worried about the prospect of an uncomfortable future relationship with the landlords, who were to remain as neighbours living in the same village. However, this explanation tends to ignore farmers’ deep attachment and desire for their own land.

The P’ungdŏk villagers’ hesitation and desires surrounding land were deeply entwined with the tenant farmers’ mode of relationship with their landlords, in other words, with the

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question of how the agricultural producers had managed the landlords’ farmland until then. For
the purpose of being tenanted and borrowing money for farming, “the tenant farmers of
P’ungdŏk Village had to present their landlords at least with some pounds of meat or something
as a way of giving a good impression after harvest every year.” The tenant farmers were so
poor that they were not able to provide money for a basic farming fund and even household
expenses without landlords’ financial support. The tenant farmers were borrowing not only land,
but also money for the necessities of farming (such as grain seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural
implements), educational expenses for children, and food during the season of spring poverty.
The farmers could usually pay off the debt at harvest time, but they would soon be in debt again.
In this circular structure of debt and land, the tenant farmers were tightly tied up with the
landlords. In this sense, the farmers were not simply worried about personal relationships. At that
moment, they were struggling with the weightier question of how they were to manage their
newly acquired land when they could not sustain their family and farmland for even one year
when financially disconnected from the landlords. This was the reason why the farmers of
P’ungdŏk Village had to pay close attention to read their landlords’ feelings in the spring of 1951.

The absence of financial resources and the small size of land were the intrinsic
problems of the Land Reform. P’ungdŏk farmers were not alone in this experience. According to
governmental reports produced throughout the 1950s and 1960s after the Land Reform, the farm
households with land below 1.5ha were experiencing chronic deficits, not being able to pay their
living expenditures. In other words, over 80% of total farm households could not secure the

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Village: Yi Se-yŏng’s Memoir]. (p. 118)
18 Nongsusanbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries]. Each year. Nongga kyŏngje chosa kyŏlgwa pogo [Report on
the Results of Farm Household Economy Survey]. Seoul: Nongsusanbu; Kim Chong-ch’ae. 1990. “Han’guk sahoe
nongminch’ŭng punhæ e kwanhan il yŏn’gu” [A Study on Peasant Differentiation in Korean Society]. In Hyŏndaeh
minimal conditions for their own subsistence from their land and labour. As a matter of course, this situation was much worse for households with land less than 0.5ha. In this situation, it was not possible for each farm household as an autonomous managerial subject to invest in farm machines, new technology, or expensive facilities, which were necessary for augmentation or at least for the stability of agricultural income. Instead, they had to divert the funds for agricultural production to their living expenses. Without financial support, they were unable to sustain their own farmland, and now they could not expect this from their previous landlords.

Independent Farmland, Isolated Labour

Each piece of independent petty farmland was like an isolated island in terms of space for production. The network of tenant farmers collapsed after the Land Reform. The landlords’ managerial support in the provision of agricultural funds, machinery, fertilizer, technology, and information – which was usually accompanied with harsh exploitation – was disconnected and not replaced by government support. These ‘autonomous’ farmers had to absorb themselves in cultivating their own small land and take responsibility for their economic management, which was an unlimited liability related to their livelihood.

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Han’guk úi nongŏp munje wa nodong undong [Agrarian Problems and Labour Movement in Contemporary Korea], edited by Han’guk sahoesa yŏn’guhoe. Seoul: Munhak kwa chisŏngsa. (p. 83)
19 As for the percentage of farmhouses by the size of farmland, refer to Table 1.2.
21 “Nongch’on korich’ae 8-hal i ŭmsŏng kŭmyung sinse, Subak kŏ’t’alkisik Nongŭn chipkye ron 500-ŏk, Kanan halsurok ssaise maryŏn” [80% of usurious loans in the countryside are illegal; The Agricultural Bank estimates the amount at 50 billion wŏn superficially; The poorer are bound to have more debts], Chosŏn ilbo 15 August 1960.
The spatial dispersion and fragmentation of agricultural production was symbolically represented in old farmers’ memories in the disappearance of peasants’ traditional labour organizations like *Ture* (두레). *Ture*, a type of agricultural labour organization, was organized by farmers at the village level during the busiest phase of the farming season in order to help each other, especially with the labour intensive planting and weeding of rice fields.

Yi Ki-yŏng’s famous peasant novel *Kohyang* (*Home Village*, 1936) described the images of *Ture* with vivid and realistic language.22

“As the sound of drums came boom-boom, they were highly excited and crowded together under the big tree of the summerhouse. Each instrument started to work in harmony, and all of the sudden the village was surrounded with the festive mood. Children walked about, raising a shout. …… They bound up their heads in towels and carried hoes at their bottom all together. Their thighs and calves bared over the knee breeches and sleeveless jackets, which looked like potbellied snakes having devoured a frog, were walking on the levees of rice paddy in a single file. …… After the *Ture* started, the mood of the villagers unified. Paek-ryong’s mother and Soe-dŭk’s mother were reconciled with each other in the process of *Ture*. In-dong and Mak-dong also came to an amicable settlement.”23

In this novel dealing with the peasant life of an agricultural village in the mid-1920s, the shabbily dressed but healthy farmers organize a *Ture* and begin to feel a form of solidarity, struggling against harsh poverty and their exploitation. *Ture* is not simply represented as a gathering for collective labour, but is described as a kind of village festival encompassing all the constituent members; the omnipresent music of the farmers serving as a key component to the celebratory mood. In the process of being associated with each other, the village neighbours

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arrive at a different stage of interrelation. Yi Ki-yŏng illustrated this change of relationship with personal reconciliations between conflicting characters and furthermore the farmers’ unified struggles as an ultimate prospect.

The communal and festive characteristics of *Ture* were also represented in the memoirs and interviews of the old living in the rural villages. Sŏ Sun-rye, born in 1927, explained, “*Ture* for weeding is like this: Working for a week or ten days, people gathered wages for labour. … … With the money, people butchered a pig and held a party on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. In a bigger village, two pigs were needed to feed all the villagers enough. … … All the village people gathered and ate the food together regardless of whether or not they worked for *Ture.*”

As seen in this statement given by an older member of the village, the word *Ture*, most of all, reminded people more of a village festival where they crowded together, and cooked and shared often hard-to-afford foods, rather than of farm work itself. In these representations of memories, heavy labour was sublimated into ‘labour play’ in the communal space of *Ture*. Those farm households that owned much land or could not provide labour for *Ture*, paid wages in general, but part of the accumulated wages were usually used for the expenditure of village parties or saved as village public funds like in the above statement. In addition, *Ture* basically aimed at completing weeding or rice-planting of all rice paddy fields in a village without regard to the amount of land ownership, paid wages, or labour contribution, which was thus much different from *P’umasi* (품앗이), a one to one way of exchanging labour power. Under the *Ture* community, the boundaries of ownership in land and labour power did not seem to be distinctively expressed, at least during the *Ture* season.

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By the 1950s, many old farmers observed that the *Ture*, a representative symbol of agrarian community, was rapidly disappearing. Their statements are important, but not so much as a source of precise facts regarding the historical cause and effect relationship between *Ture* and the Land Reform. Rather, the value of these accounts is located in their ability to provide vivid descriptions of the atmosphere in the fields after the Land Reform. In particular, some interesting accounts explain rural villagers’ shifting attitude toward cooperative labour after the Land Reform. Yi Sun-sŏk at Hakbongri Village in Kongju County stated, “Everybody was concerned only about making their living. Nobody came to do village affairs. People didn’t feel the need of *Ture*, solving (possible shortage of hands) by *P’umasi* (품앗이, exchange of work) or *Nop* (놉, employment of daily labourers). It seems that *Ture* disappeared after the Land Reform in particular.”

“Having received some land through the Land Reform after the liberation,” Kim Chŏng-sik and Sin Pong-rye at Songch’on Village in Taejŏn City also stated, “People didn’t need *Ture* so much.” Even though some of the farmers’ accounts did not directly mention the Land Reform, the context for the disappearance of *Ture* was deeply rooted in the effect of the Land Reform in the 1950s. “As the population rapidly migrated and people began to place much value only on their own property and labour,” Sŏ Yong-ŏp at Soryong

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25 According to Chu Kang-hyŏn’s analysis on the disappearing point of *Ture*, thirty *Tures* out of his sixty cases in total disappeared after the 1950s. In other words, 50% of *Ture* was actually disappearing after the Land Reform and the Korean War. Yet, he adds that traditional *Ture* already disappeared during the colonial rule, and the *Tures* after the Liberation of Korea were transformed and residual types of *Ture*. Chu Kang-hyŏn. 2006. *Ture, nongmin ŭi yŏksa* [Ture, the History of Peasants]. Kyŏnggi-do P’aju-si: Tŭlnyŏk. (pp. 745-746)

26 As for the disappearance of *Ture*, there have been different opinions. Kang Chŏng-t’aek, an agricultural economist who prepared a draft for the Land Reform as a vice-minister of Agriculture in South Korea, understood that it had already begun to collapse at the end of the Japanese colonial period. (Kang Chŏng-t’aek. 2008. *Singminji Chosŏn ŭi nongch’on wahoe wa nongch’ŏn kyŏngje: Kang Chŏng-t’aek sŏnseang ūi saengae wa hangmun* [The Rural Society and Economy in Colonial Korea: Kang Chŏng-t’aek’s Life and Scholarship]. Translated by Pak Tong-sŏng and compiled by Yi Mun-ung. Seoul: YBM Sisa) Anthropologist Chu Kang-hyŏn explains that this phenomenon resulted from various factors such as migration after the Korean War, rural exodus since the 1960s, and the advent and diffusion of weedicide in the 1970s. (Chu Kang-hyŏn. 2006. *Ture, nongmin ŭi yŏksa* [Ture, the History of Peasants]. Kyŏnggi-do P’aju-si: Tŭlnyŏk. (pp. 746-749))


Village in Kongju County recollected, “Ture couldn’t exist any longer.” Similarly, Kang Pyŏng-hak and Yŏm Sun-an at Manggol Village in Kongju County remembered, “Ture had existed even after the Liberation of Korea, but disappeared after the Korean War. After the war, Ture changed into a method of farming one’s own land individually as one saw fit.” Kim P’il-hyŏn at Samgok Village in P’uyŏ County supported these accounts by saying, “Ture disappeared in the late 1950s. This was because farming methods changed and the mood of a communal society collapsed.”

The farmers’ statements regarding Ture explain that the villagers concentrated their energies on their own land and labour as almost all farm households were able to possess and cultivate their own farmland through the opportunities of the Land Reform. The previous ties of solidarity and village community were loosened. It was hard to find people who were willing to participate in village work, and village people thought that Ture was no longer necessary for the village. They even believed that it was much more convenient to hire daily labourers or simply exchange work than to be engaged in Ture during the busy farming seasons. “Doing Ture was a loss of money because hired workers would work more.” In this farmer’s expression of “loss,” there did not remain a vestige of the borderless community experienced under the banner of Ture, which did not clearly distinguish one’s rice paddy and labour from another’s.

However, the farmers’ memoirs still leave questions regarding the decline of Ture. If Ture was such an enjoyable and open communality experience, how did the sudden possession of a little land exert such a strong influence upon Ture which had a long history in each village?

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At this juncture, it is necessary to de-romanticize Ture’s longstanding position as Korean ethnic labour festival, and instead to focus on the relations of production in which farmers were compelled to conduct Ture. For this, it will be also helpful to recall why “the tenant farmers of P’ungdŏk Village had to present landlords at least with some pounds of meat or something as a way of giving a good impression after harvest every year,” paying attention to their landlords’ feelings.\(^33\)

Even if Ture was a labour community representing the unity and ties of agricultural workers, it could not be detached from the complex relationship based on the landlord-tenant system.\(^34\) In other words, Ture did not only provide a sense of communal belonging and an incentive for the mobilization of the intensive labour power needed during the busy farming season, but at the same time Ture was a means of giving “good impression” to landlords by participating in working the large landlords’ rice paddies and fields. When Yi Ki-yŏng, a KAPF (Korea Artista Proleta Federatio) activist writer, illuminated the possibility of farmers’ united struggle against the colonial tenant system through Ture in his novel Kohyang (Home Village), his expectations depended on the idea of Ture as the model of solidarity among tenant farmers. Ironically, however, the farmers’ labour solidarity also supported the large land ownership system through collective labour supply for their landlords’ land.

Once 96% of the total farm households began to have their own property after the Land Reform, such a ‘hopeful’ unity of agricultural workers and farmers rapidly collapsed. More


fundamentally, however, it can be said that the shift of production relations did not require the farmers to organize and participate in the community apparatus for the maintenance of the landlord-tenant system; the farmers no longer had large landlords to whom they had to give a ‘good impression’ under the Law on Land Reform which restricted land ownership of more than 3ha.

As the means of production change, so too do the social organizations that both depend on and arise out of those means. Production on the newly partitioned small-farms did not require convergence and flux of labour power through the Ture. When farmland belonged to a small number of landlords, it was not possible to cultivate all the farmland without gathering and arranging labour power. Yet, lands which were infinitely divided into less than 2ha, mostly below 0.5ha, did not need such a movement or flow of labour power because each farm household was able to cultivate its own small land without the help of collective labour. Contrary to the earlier situation, the surplus of agricultural labour power in small farmland was becoming a social problem. A feature article of a newspaper in 1960 reported this situation in contrast with the shortage of hands in agriculture during the Japanese colonial period, wrote: “It was the history of the late Japanese colonial period that agricultural villages needed even students’ labour service in lack of hands due to various requisitions and conscriptions. Although the large army of six hundred thousand soldiers is filled only with young men, the agricultural villages have superfluous supply of labour power now.”35 Most farm households which had land of below 0.5ha actually cultivated their farmland alone with an old farmer’s labour, letting sons and

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35 “Nongch’on nodongnyŏk: Chŏlmŭn nom ŭn ttŏnagado ttang i choba nama tonda” [Labour power in the countryside: The size of farmland is so small that there is a surplus of land, even if the young move into the city], Chosŏn ilbo 22 August 1960.
daughters find other jobs because the farmland could not absorb their labour power. Even during the busy farming seasons, family labour was enough for most farm households. In the case that more hands were needed, it was more preferred to employ daily workers or exchange work than to organize Ture because the wage was much cheaper than the cost of Ture under the oversupply of agricultural labour as compared to the size of farmland. As of 1965 after the project of Land Reform was finalized, statistical data on agricultural labour reflect this dominant percentage of family labour in total labour input of farm households as follows: family labour, 72.1%; employed labour, 21.5%; and exchange of work, 6.4%.

In short, the proliferation of independent petty farmland loosened labour communities in agricultural villages. Actually such labour communities as Ture in particular could not exist detached from the relationship established under the landlord-tenant system. Thus, as the Land Reform undermined the landlord-tenant relationship, Ture also began to decline. In terms of production space, the proliferation of independent petty farm households and the collapse of agricultural labour communities cut off the convergence and flux of labour subjects through which it was sometimes imagined to make an open place of communication and draw the change of relationships among neighbours and on an extended level. The space of production was replaced with internal family labour instead of the arrangement of communal labour power. Each

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36 “Nongch’on nodongnyŏk: Chŏlmŭn nom ŭn ttŏnagado ttang i choba nama tonda” [Labour power in the countryside: The size of farmland is so small that there is a surplus of land, even if the young move into the city], Chasŏn ilbo 22 August 1960.
farm household with small farmland was becoming more ‘autonomous’ as an independent economic subject but isolated from each other.

Farmers outside the ‘Stable Economy’ in the 1950s

“Breathless” Barley Hill

For South Korean farmers in the 1950s, the toughest hill to climb in the world was the Barley Hill (Porit kogae). The Barley Hill, a metaphorical expression indicating the springtime famine, was the time when farmers impatiently waited for the harvest of barley after all the stored rice from the previous year’s harvest had been consumed in winter. It was ironic that the independent farmers still had to suffer from such a chronic hardship even after cultivating their own land, yet this ironic situation reflected the actual limitations of the Land Reform. Harvested rice and barley in farm households usually ran out before March or April, and painful hardship started, reaching its peak during May and June until the new barley crops filled up the empty grain-chests. In the case of 1956, a newspaper reported that 1.17 million people of 227,174 farm households on the national scale had already begun starving as of March 15 even when the season of Barley Hill had not yet arrived in earnest.39 In some of the most serious cases, over 80% of villagers suffered from starvation during this time of the year.40 News articles reporting statistical numbers on food-short farmers and farm households were produced every year,

39 “Mokpulin’gyŏn ŭi ch’amsang” [Unbearable misery to witness], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 2 April 1956.
40 “Maengny'ŏnggi e hŏdŏginŭn nongch’on ch’amsang” [The misery of rural villages struggling with Barley Hill season], Tonga ilbo 6 June 1955; “Mokpulin’gyŏn ŭi ch’amsang” [Unbearable misery to witness], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 2 April 1956.
especially throughout 1950s, as if they had prepared some fixed news article for the coming season annually.

The adjective of “breathless (Sum kappūn)” often accompanied the expression of Barley Hill. To get over the breathless Barley Hill (Sum kappūn porit kogae), farmers’ families barely managed to stay alive by eating herb-roots and tree-barks (草根木皮, Ch’ogŭn mokp’i). Porridge made from corn, rice chaff, sorghum, and bean sprouts was a meal for better-off households. Poorer families had to survive mostly with more tough ‘foods’ such as young wormwood, pine tree bark, and dried radish leaves. Many people developed unique symptoms of yellowish swelling from starvation and malnutrition, which was called Puhwang pyŏng. Children were the most vulnerable age group. In a reported case at Chuch’ŏn Elementary School in Namwŏn County, 290 children out of the whole 350 students attended school without lunch and especially 90 children of them were experiencing symptoms of undernourishment in 1956. Another article dealing with broader samples of 63 schools in Hongch’ŏn County reported that

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41 “Sum kappun porit kogae, Ch’ungnam sŏman 200-yŏ sedae ka inong” [Breathless Barley Hill; About 200 farm households leave the land in South Ch’ungch’ŏng Province alone], Kyŏngyang sinmun 26 March 1953; “Sum kappūl porit kogae” [Barley Hill to be breathless], Kyŏngyang sinmun 30 April 1955; “Sum kappūn porit kogae (sang)(chung)(tha)” [Breathless Barley Hill (1)(2)(3)], Kyŏngyang sinmun 4-6 June 1957; “Ch’un’gung pori nŭn charajiman porit kogae nŭn sum kappūda” [Although barley keeps growing during the spring poverty season, the Barley Hill still makes life hard], Kyŏngyang sinmun 4 April 1959.

42 “Pyŏkchisŏn ch’ogŭn mokp’i ro yŏnmyŏng” [Remote villagers subsist on herb-roots and tree-bark], Tonga ilbo 31 January 1957.

43 “Susujuk kkŭrinŭn ch’ŭng ŭn sangryu, Puhwangj’ŭng hwanja sokch’ul” [Sorghum porridge is a rather better meal for the rich; Patients with symptoms of yellowish swelling from starvation appear in succession], Tonga ilbo 23 February 1957.

44 “Mokpulin’gyŏn ŭi ch’amsang” [Unbearable misery to witness], Kyŏngyang sinmun 2 April 1956; “Sangsang oe ŭi ch’amsang … Chŏlllyang nongga honam hyŏnji pojo” [Misery beyond imagination; Field report on food-short farm households in Chŏlla Province], Tonga ilbo 11 March 1957.

45 “Pyŏkchisŏn ch’ogŭnmokp’i ro yŏnmyŏng” [Remote villagers subsist on herb-roots and tree-bark], Tonga ilbo 31 January 1957; “Susujuk kkŭrinŭn ch’ŭng ŭn sangryu, Puhwangj’ŭng hwanja sokch’ul” [Sorghum porridge is a rather better meal for the rich; Patients with symptoms of yellowish swelling from starvation appear in succession], Tonga ilbo 23 February 1957; “Puhwangj’ŭng e kŏlyŏ mi 5-myŏng samang” [Five dead already from yellowish swelling from starvation], Kyŏngyang sinmun 30 March 1958.

46 “9-hal i kyŏlsik adong, Chuch’on kungmin hakkyo ŭi ch’amsang” [90% of students undernourished; The misery of Chuch’on elementary school], Tonga ilbo 13 June 1956.
7,384 out of 24,163 students skipped meals.47 Starved children went around in search of anything edible. Sometimes, this brought about horrible accidents. In Wŏnju County, a buried grenade from the Korean War exploded and killed a boy who was digging up arrowroot to help alleviate his hunger.48 Such tragedy did not stop at unexpected accidents. The hardship of hunger often destroyed friendships and led to crimes for survival, featured in the social issue section of daily newspapers. In Yesan County, a man set fire to his friend’s house in the frustration and anger that his request to borrow rice was rejected.49 In Posŏng County, there was an attempted armed robbery for rice. A news article stressed that it was a clumsy crime ‘only for rice,’ not for money.50 Giving up farming and leaving the home village was the choice of less pessimistic farmers.51 The most desperate catastrophe was found in the headlines such as “Facing the Barley Hill, a Rash of Suicides.”52

The famine of the farmers had little to do with whether their harvest was good or bad. The harvest from 1957 to 1959 was a record-breaking success for three consecutive years.53 Yet, farmers especially with tiny lands of under 0.5 ha had to face the absurd situation in which their rice reserved for self-consumption began to be exhausted not long after the fall harvest.54 It was during the great bumper harvest of 1958 that the farm household economy in South Korea

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47 “Kyŏlsik adong 7000-yŏmyŏng, Hongch’ŏn-gun ha ŭi ch’amsang” [7000 poorly-fed children; The misery of Honch’ŏn County], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 11 July 1956.
48 “Inong, chasal nallo nŭnda” [Rural exodus and suicide increase day by day], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 25 March 1957.
49 “Ssal an chundago panghwa, Sum kapp’n porit kogae” [Refusal to lend rice leads man to set fire to his friend’s house; The misery of breathless Barley Hill], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 May 1955.
51 “Inong, chasal nallo nŭnda” [Rural exodus and suicide increase day by day], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 25 March 1957.
52 “Porit kogae aptugo sokch’ul han’n chasal” [Facing the Barley Hill, a rash of suicides], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 18 January 1956.
54 “P’ungnyŏn kigŭn ŭi ch’amsang” [The misery of a rich year’s famine], Tonga ilbo 4 December 1957.
recorded the biggest deficit in its annual balance of income and expenditure in post-war 1950s. The situation was called the ‘rich year’s famine (P’ungnyŏn kigŭn). The primary reason for the oxymoronic plight could be found in the circular structure of poverty and debt. Small farmers suffered from the absolute lack of farming funds and living expenditures. They had to cultivate their small lands through private loans or, in fortunate cases, with meagre subsidies from the government. The harvest season was the time to pay off all kinds of miscellaneous debts with the sales of lower-priced rice. What awaited the farmers after the ‘harvest liquidation’ was only a renewed demand for loans for the next farming year and with never enough food to get through the winter.

The famine and chronic deficit drove petty farmers to sell even unripened barley and rice plants to grain dealers before its harvest. Starving farmers had no choice but to deal in standing barley plants for the spring famine season (立麥先賣, Immaek sŏnmae), and very soon they also had to trade standing rice plants to secure cash to pay for fertilizers, farming utensils, and other living expenditures (立稻先賣, Ipto sŏnmae). The sale price for the pre-
harvest rice and barley was often about half or below half of the market price.\textsuperscript{60} Recognizing that such an exploitative pre-harvest sale was deteriorating the agricultural economy, the government provided farmers with temporary funds and banned the advance sale with administrative means whenever it became a social issue.\textsuperscript{61} However the stopgap measures with meagre financial subsidy were inadequate to stop the pre-harvest sales being repeated every year.\textsuperscript{62} In the deep mire of inescapable hardship, it was not difficult for rural residents to hear the news that their close neighbours sold their farmland in the end. The distribution of land through the Land Reform a couple of years before, had not proven to be a solution for the economic hardship faced by its new owners.\textsuperscript{63}

**Non-Cooperative Agricultural Cooperatives**

The defectiveness of the Land Reform was often blamed as the fundamental cause of rural poverty. Observing the chronic famine in the countryside, analytical reports and editorials in newspapers wanted to account for the source of agricultural hardship. They pointed their accusatory finger at the structural incompleteness of the Land Reform for bringing about the “excessive misery (Chinach’in ch’amsang)” of rural areas.\textsuperscript{64} For a financial specialist contributing to a newspaper, the impoverished condition of the rural communities was nothing

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\textsuperscript{60} “Porit kogae e hŏdŏginŭn nongch’on” [Rural villages struggling with Barley Hill], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 21 May 1955; “Monaegi to kkŭnnagi chŏn e ipto sŏnmae sŏnghaeng” [The advance sale of rice prevalent even before finishing rice planting], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 23 July 1955.

\textsuperscript{61} “Yŏjŏn han ipto sŏnmae” [The advance sale of rice still continues], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 1 October 1953; “Ipto sŏnmae chagŭm ŭi sibiron” [The rights and wrongs of the advance sale prevention fund], Tonga ilbo 30 August 1954.

\textsuperscript{62} “Ipto sŏnmae chagŭm ŭi sibiron” [The rights and wrongs of the advance sale prevention fund], Tonga ilbo 30 August 1954.

\textsuperscript{63} “Sasŏl: Ch’un’gunggi chŏl’ŏng nongga e taehan taebich’aek ŭi sewŏra” [Editorial: Take relief measures for food-short farm households in the spring poverty season], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 3 March 1954.

\textsuperscript{64} “Ipto sŏnmae chagŭm ŭi sibiron” [The rights and wrongs of the advance sale prevention fund], Tonga ilbo 30 August 1954.
but a “fate” of small-sized economy and low productivity that were derived from the Land
Reform.65 This remark indicated the innate limitation of cultivating small sized farmlands under
3ha. Other analyses in different articles criticized the absence of necessary follow-up measures
after the Land Reform. An article questioning solutions for the rural destitution affirmed that it
was an “illusion” to believe that the Land Reform itself would guarantee the prosperity of the
agricultural economy, and then claimed that the Land Reform should have accompanied “various
supporting policies” together with the passage of the Land Reform Law or prior to it.66 The
expression ‘various supporting policies’ was not an equivocal answer to the article’s own
question, at least for the readers and writers who had an interest on agricultural issues at that time.
As for the necessary policies to make up for the Land Reform, it was a kind of common-sense
context to claim policies for the systemic provision of financial assistance and the establishment
of organizations for the sake of the farmers.67

The sympathetic calls for agricultural finance and organization were centred on an
agenda about how to establish agricultural cooperatives. Agricultural cooperatives had a broad
range of perspectives on what should constitute their socio-economic goals and managerial
methods. Still, there remained a generally accepted premise that an agricultural cooperative
would alleviate rural destitution and act as reform-oriented farmers’ organization that could

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65 “Ipto sŏnmae chagŭm ŭi sibiron” [The rights and wrongs of the advance sale prevention fund], Tonga ilbo 30
August 1954.
66 “Nongch’on kungp’ip ŭi taech’aek ŭn?” [What are the countermeasures against rural poverty?], Tonga ilbo 14
January 1955.
67 “Yŏjŏn han ipto sŏnmae” [The advance sale of rice still continues], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 1 October 1953;
“Nongch’on ŭi mosun t’agaech’ae” [Remedy for the problems in the rural villages], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 9 August
1954; “Ipto sŏnmae chagŭm ŭi sibiron” [The rights and wrongs of the advance sale prevention fund], Tonga ilbo 30
August 1954; “Nongch’on kungp’ip ŭi taech’aek ŭn?” [What are the countermeasures against rural poverty?], Tonga
ilbo 14 January 1955.
address issues related to agricultural finance, distribution, and production. In fact, such a hopeful request for an agricultural cooperative had been an important half part of the original design for the Land Reform, which was drafted by relatively progressive bureaucrats in the Ministry of Agriculture. The first Minster of Agriculture, Cho Pong-am, proclaimed in 1948 that the Land Reform and the establishment of agricultural cooperative would be the two top priority projects for the Ministry of Agriculture. Bureaucrats in charge of drafting the Land Reform Law in the ministry had a shared perspective that the agricultural cooperative in support of governmental financing should make an organic connection with the Land Reform to keep reforming agricultural industry by achieving mechanization, large-scale farming, or collective cultivation within private ownership system.

However, the issue of agricultural cooperatives was not a simple agenda to everyone. As for the technical way of institutionalizing the cooperative, there were incessant conflicts between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance regarding who would manage the new organization and if the cooperative would conduct credit business for itself. This

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71 Chin Hŭng-bok. 1999. “Chonghap nonhyŏp ū sŏl’il” [The Establishment of the Comprehensive Agricultural Cooperatives]. In Nongjŏng pansegi ch’angŏn [Witnesses to the Half-Century History of Korean Agricultural Administration], edited by Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwon [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. Seoul: Nongnimbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry]. (pp. 147-158); Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwon [Korea
looked like a typical hegemonic scramble for the right of administrative management and supervision, but such inter-institutional conflicts were closely connected to different plans and approaches for agriculture and macro-economy. The bureaucrats in the Ministry of Finance gave more emphasis to a ‘stable economy’ by controlling inflation and reducing fiscal outlays, while the chief managers in the Ministry of Agriculture planned more intensive financial support to agriculture through an organic cooperative system of the Land Reform, agricultural cooperative, and national agricultural bank.\textsuperscript{72} Sometimes the conception of agricultural cooperation itself was criticized as being communist, causing ideological debates in the chaotic Cold War milieu.\textsuperscript{73} All of the conflicts and debates slowed down the legislative process on agricultural cooperative until its final passage in 1957, when almost a decade had passed since its initial proposal.

Nevertheless, the agricultural cooperative finally organized by the Syngman Rhee regime was not ‘cooperative’ enough to complement the Land Reform and improve the farmers’ meagre living. By the laws on the Agricultural Cooperative and the Agricultural Bank promulgated in 1957, the new agricultural organization was functionally divided into two distinctive institutions: the Agricultural Cooperative in charge of agribusiness affairs and the

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\textsuperscript{73} “Yŏjŏk” [Excursus (Kyŏnghyang sinmun column)], \textit{Kyŏnghyang sinmun} 9 February 1957; “Hoengsŏl susŏl” [Nonsense], \textit{Tonga ilbo} 16 March 1955.
Agricultural Bank in charge of finance and credit affairs.\textsuperscript{74} The former was to be supervised by the Ministry of Agriculture and the latter by the Ministry of Finance.\textsuperscript{75} This structure generally paralleled the claims maintained by the Ministry of Finance. Farmers generally needed credit loan service since the distributed land could not be used as security by the Land Reform Law, but the Agricultural Bank stressed large secured loans by the principle of conservative management instead of petty-sum credit loans.\textsuperscript{76} Farmers had a huge demand for long-term loans to be used for farming fund but the Agricultural Bank could not support them due to a lack of financial investment from the government.\textsuperscript{77} Even if the Agricultural Cooperative was established as many had hoped, it could not work for the farmers due to the fact that it had no proper financial independence or fiscal support from related institutions. Most of all, the government-led Agricultural Cooperative did not secure any institutional prospect to transform into an ‘autonomous’ association based on the farmers’ voluntary participation and decision-making process.

The form of the Agricultural Cooperative as a solution to rural poverty was related to basic assumptions on ‘development’ or ‘reconstruction’ in the post-war capitalist regime. The influential economic bureaucrats and scholars of the Syngman Rhee government worked mainly for the Ministries of Finance, Commerce and Industry, and Reconstruction. They gave top


\textsuperscript{75} “Nongp hyŏpcho pŏban t’onggwa” [Law on Agricultural Cooperatives passes], Tonga ilbo 2 February 1957; “Nongp pŏban wanjŏn t’onggwa” [Law on the Agricultural Bank passes completely], Tonga ilbo 3 February 1957; “Nongp sollip wi kusŏng” [Committee set up to establish an Agricultural Bank], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 8 April 1957.

\textsuperscript{76} Nongp hyŏptong chohap chunganghoe [National Agricultural Cooperative Federation]. 1963. Han’guk nongp kŭmyungsa [History of Korean Agricultural Finance]. Seoul: Nongp hyŏptong chohap chunganghoe. (pp. 283-284)

\textsuperscript{77} Nongp hyŏptong chohap chunganghoe [National Agricultural Cooperative Federation]. 1963. Han’guk nongp kŭmyungsa [History of Korean Agricultural Finance]. Seoul: Nongp hyŏptong chohap chunganghoe. (p. 283)
priority to the “stability of economy (Kyŏngje anjŏng)” by means of managing currency and inflation, which was also the preconditional claim of the U.S. government who provided a large amount of economic aid in the midst of the Cold War confrontation.78 For the economic ideologues, ‘stability’ was a basic foundation for the reconstruction of manufacture industries, and the growth of manufacturing sector was central to their conception of ‘economic development.’ They gave no consideration to the elementary contradiction of ‘stability and growth.’ Such an easy-going prospect acquired a full explanation when views on agriculture appeared in their statements; “The centrality of economic development lies in the development of production. ... [And] only the reconstruction through industrial [manufacturing] production leads to the true economic development. … Agricultural industry tends to be self-sufficient, while factory production has not been improved enough. …”80 This kind of developmentalist viewpoint with contrasting estimation on manufacturing and agriculture had been publicly presented by Paek Tu-jin, who had influential power in the decision making process on economic issues until 1956, being appointed as the President of Korean Industrial Bank, Minister of Finance, Prime Minister, and South Korean Representative of the Combined Economic Board (CEB); the CEB was one of the most important economic organizations to South Korea where important negotiations and agreements on economic aids were made between the U.S. and South Korean governments. Restricting the expansion of currency and inflation was crucial in dealing

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with the post-war economic crisis, yet the adherence to stability came out with a kind of divisional understanding of manufacturing and “self-sufficient” agriculture, giving priority to the former. According to this manufacturing-centred classification, farmers and agricultural workers, who formed about 70% of the population, were likely to serve only the role of supporting economic stability by providing cheap agricultural products, far from being protected as a part of the whole economy. The final form of the Agricultural Cooperative reflected the logic of such hierarchical post-war developmentalism.

**Taxes and Prices in the Countryside**

The desire for stability often requires instability elsewhere. The most urgent task to alleviate the wartime and post-war inflation pressure was to secure staple foods without a considerable increase in monetary expenditures. During the Korean War, there was an explosive demand for rice and barley to be used as provisions for the army, salary for officials, and ration for urban squatters and refugees. However, the South Korean government did not intend to use monetary supply to meet the demand due to worries of inflation. The government’s measure was to collect agricultural profit taxes from land in grains. The tax was called as the Temporary Land Yield Tax (*Imsi t’oji sudûkse*), but it lasted too long to be called “temporary.” It was in force almost for a decade from September 25, 1951 to December 31, 1960, exacerbating the agricultural taxpayers’ hardships.\(^8\)

The real ratio of the Land Yield Tax to the nation’s entire tax revenues reached approximately 70 to 90 percent in the early 1950s.\(^9\)

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10 to 28 percent of the yields in the initial year, but changed many times reflecting severe public criticisms throughout the 1950s.\textsuperscript{83} However, considering that the distributed land’s farmers had to repay 30\% of yields in grain for five years after the Land Reform and the estimation on annual yields was often exaggerated,\textsuperscript{84} the Land Yield Tax was a fatal blow to the agricultural producers. In particular for the small-income farmers with distributed land, it was often the case that they had to pay almost 70\% or more of their yield\textsuperscript{85}; the urban workers of similar income level with the rural tax payers were exempted from income tax at that time.\textsuperscript{86} Also, it was definitely a discrimination to force only farmers to pay tax in kind when the value of actual products, especially agricultural products, was much higher than cash under high inflation. The differentiated zone of tax only for farmers was built in the name of ‘economic stability,’ but the agricultural producers could not be a part of it, being the prime source of stability yet left alone in instability.

The discriminating tax system was importunate to the farmers. All the tax collectors working for local taxation offices were mobilized to knock on the door of every single farmer’s

\textsuperscript{83} Yi Ho-ch’\ol. 1999. “Imsi t’oji sudŭkse pugwa” [The Imposition of the Temporary Land Yield Tax]. In \textit{Nongjŏng pansegi chăngŏn [Witnesses to the Half-Century History of Korean Agricultural Administration]}, edited by Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwŏn [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. Seoul: Nongnimbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry]. (pp. 57-72)


house, explain the tax system, and urge them to pay without delay.\textsuperscript{87} When the farmers failed to pay their taxes, all of their household necessities were confiscated.\textsuperscript{88} Faced with foreclosure, individuals often implored the tax officials to wait until the busy farming season had ended to collect, but this request was frequently rejected.\textsuperscript{89} Farmers felt humiliated when officials entered the room without taking their shoes off and seized all of their belongings such as clothes, bedding, furniture, clock, sewing machine, iron pot for rice cooking, plow ox, stored beans and sweet potatoes, and even vegetables in the garden.\textsuperscript{90} The revenue collectors executing ‘economic stability’ were “threatening lords” and “phobic subjects causing fears at the very name of them.”\textsuperscript{91} Rural villagers attempted to appease the officials by serving wine and luxurious meals, which asked the suffering farmers to pay for their share of the expenses.\textsuperscript{92} In this milieu, tax collectors were often corrupt, driving farmers to more desperate situations. News articles dealing with the corruptions of tax officials did not stop throughout the 1950s. The venal officials sometimes took bribes and reduced taxes,\textsuperscript{93} and other times embezzled the collected grains and

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\item[87] “T’oji sudûkse chingsu rûl wallyo” [Collection of the Land Yield Tax completed], Kyŏngyang sinmun 5 January 1954.
\item[88] “Sudûkse minapcha e ch’aap ûl tanhaeng” [The Land Yield Tax defaulters foreclosed upon], Tonga ilbo 8 December 1955; “Nongch’on ūi ch’aap sodong” [Property seizure disturbance in rural villages], Tonga ilbo 14 December 1955; “T’ojise minapcha e ch’aap sodong ausông ch’i’nûn Okku-gun Imp’i-myŏnmin” [Residents of Imp’i Township in Okgu Country cry out for seizure of property on default caused by the Land Yield Tax], Tonga ilbo 26 December 1955.
\item[89] “T’osuse sunap kanggwôn e ch’ap chungji hoso” [Farmers appeal to stop seizure of property against strong-arm collection of the Land Yield Tax], Kyŏngyang sinmun 9 December 1955; “T’osuse sunap kanggwôn e ch’ap chungji hoso” [Farmers appeal to stop seizure of property against strong-arm collection of the Land Yield Tax], Kyŏngyang sinmun 9 December 1955; “T’ojise minapcha e ch’aap sodong ausông ch’i’nûn Okku-gun Imp’i-myŏnmin” [Residents of Imp’i Township in Okgu Country cry out for seizure of property on default caused by the Land Yield Tax], Tonga ilbo 26 December 1955.
\item[90] “Nongch’on ūi ch’aap sodong” [Property seizure disturbance in rural villages], Tonga ilbo 14 December 1955.
\item[91] “Nongch’on ūi ch’aap sodong” [Property seizure disturbance in rural villages], Tonga ilbo 14 December 1955; “Kûmp’ûm i chwau hanûn t’oji sudûkse chojông” [The Land Yield Tax easily determined by bribes; Adjustment needed], Tonga ilbo 1 October 1957.
\item[92] “Chŏng-Pu myŏnjang hoc’ul” [The chief and deputy chief of a township summoned], Kyŏngyang sinmun 10 March 1955; “Seri wa myŏnjang tûng kiso, hŏwi kongmunso rûl chaksŏng” [Tax officials and a township chief prosecuted for forgery of official documents], Kyŏngyang sinmun 22 May 1955; “Sudûkse sakkam mikki ro seri wa myŏn chigwôn hyŏpcap” [Tax officials and a township chief trick farmers by offering to reduce the Land Yield Tax], Tonga ilbo 21 June 1955; “Chibang kwan’gi e ilŏn, Sŏndaegŭm haengbang kunggŭm” [Remark on the
increased taxes to make up for the shortage.\textsuperscript{94} Feeling desperate at the unaffordable tax burden, some of the farmers chose to commit suicide\textsuperscript{95} or abandon farming by moving out from their unstable home village.\textsuperscript{96}

The mechanism for price stability made another but a little more fundamental condition in the market that excluded the desperate farmers from the concept of ‘economic stability.’ The food deficiency was a serious problem especially during the Korean War (1950-1953). The shortage of farm production and war-time inflation drastically raised rice price from...
191 won per 144 kg right before the war in 1949 to 9,300 won in 1952.\textsuperscript{97} To make up for the shortage and alleviate high rice prices, unprecedented amounts of foreign grains flowed into South Korea in 1953. Even though the domestic yield of barley and minor grains was abundant especially in that year, farmers had to face a collapsing agricultural market where the price of all grains dropped sharply.\textsuperscript{98} Foreign grains were indispensable in reducing famine, but the problem was that the crashed price of grains deteriorated only farm producers’ exchange conditions in the market where the price of other manufactured goods were still affected by inflation. Economists attempted to explain the farmers’ disadvantage with ‘the price scissors,’ a term frequently used to indicate the unequal exchange in the market between steeply falling agricultural prices and steady industrial prices.\textsuperscript{99} For the farmers, however, the problem was more intuitive and simpler. A farmer by the name of Ch’oe Ch’ŏn-sik expressed his frustration to a journalist he had met at a local market in 1953; “It’s really tough for farmers. I barely manage to buy only rubber shoes or a kid’s clothes with the money from the selling of 8 kg of rice. … … Although general prices are still high, rice is getting cheaper. That’ll screw up only farmers. We’re going to be left with bare hands rather than the pleasure of great harvest when this and that are deducted from our products of blood and sweat.”\textsuperscript{100} His blood and sweat could not be fairly exchanged for rubber shoes or

\textsuperscript{97} Pak Hyŏn-ch’ae. 1981. “Mi ingyŏ nongsanmul wŏnjo ŭi kyŏngjejŏk kwigyŏl” [U.S. Aid of Surplus Agricultural Products and Its Economic Consequences]. In 1950-yŏndae ŭi insik [Understanding the 1950s], edited by Chin Tŏkk'yu et al. Seoul: Han’gilsa. (p. 280)

\textsuperscript{98} Pak Hyŏn-ch’ae. 1981. “Mi ingyŏ nongsanmul wŏnjo ŭi kyŏngjejŏk kwigyŏl” [U.S. Aid of Surplus Agricultural Products and Its Economic Consequences]. In 1950-yŏndae ŭi insik [Understanding the 1950s], edited by Chin Tŏkk'yu et al. Seoul: Han’gilsa. (p. 280)

\textsuperscript{99} “Tosi kyŏngje wa nongch’on kyŏngje” [The urban economy and rural economy], Kyŏnghyang simmun 25 November 1954; “Nongch’on kungp’ip t’aage ŭi taech’aek (5)” [Solutions to rural poverty (5)], Tonga ilbo 26 July 1955; “Saal kwa piryo, Kyŏngje anjŏng munje ŭi ch’ochŏm (sang)” [Rice and fertilizer;Key to economic stability (1)], Kyŏnghyang simmun 18 September 1955; “Nongmin ŭl sallirŏmyŏn (sang)” [To save farmers (1)], Kyŏnghyang simmun 30 March 1956; “Singnyang chŏngch’ae e hoeŭi (2)” [Skepticism about food policy (2)], Tonga ilbo 20 May 1957.

\textsuperscript{100} “P’ungjak edo kippŭn morŭn nongch’on, Kokka p’oknak e pimyŏng” [Gloomy farm villages despite a good harvest; Shrieking in grain price collapse], Kyŏnghyang simmun 6 October 1953.
his children’s clothes in the market where two different price spheres existed and the price of agricultural produces could be manipulated for the ‘lofty good’ of economic stability.

U.S. agricultural surpluses played a key role in the price mechanism even after the Korean War. The U.S. government had to dispose of accumulated agricultural surpluses by any means to protect its domestic farming industry especially after 1948 when demand in Europe began to recede.\(^{101}\) It was ideal if the surpluses could be used as a bulwark against communism and at the same time as a foundation for future steady markets. The total amount of grains imported to South Korea from 1956 to 1960 averaged 600,000 M/T per year, which accounted for about 15% of the whole amount produced in South Korea.\(^{102}\) Most of them were through the U.S. assistance programs, which required the South Korean government to reserve the equivalent value of the grains in Korean currency. The reserved fund was mostly used for military purposes where, otherwise, U.S. dollars had to be spent.\(^{103}\) The continuous inflow of foreign grains into the domestic market brought about low prices for agricultural produce throughout the 1950s, and this resulted in the stabilization of inflation especially in the late 1950s. An agricultural economist criticized this phenomenon as “anti-agricultural stabilization” in 1960.\(^{104}\) Providing two contrastive price indexes for falling grains and rising non-grains, he affirmed that the control


\(^{103}\) Pak Hyŏn-ch’ae. 1981. “Mi ingyŏ nongsanmul wŏnjo ŭi kyŏngjejŏk kwigyŏl” [U.S. Aid of Surplus Agricultural Products and Its Economic Consequences]. In 1950-yŏnda e ē insik [Understanding the 1950s], edited by Chin Tŏkkuyu et al. Seoul: Han’gilsa. (pp. 288-289)

\(^{104}\) “Nongch’on ŭi pin’gon wi e tosi ŭi pŏnyŏng” [Prosperity of the city at the cost of rural poverty], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 4 August 1960.
of inflation for the past five years was possible only by “forcing farmers to bleed.” According to the Seoul Wholesale Price Index (The Base Year, 1947 =100), the price of fertilizers was increased by 539 times as of 1959, whereas that of grains was increased by 191 times.

The market was definitely a place of convergence where diverse divisions gathered. U.S. grains flowed into the South Korean market for the purpose of stabilizing the capitalist bloc in a Cold War economic strategy against the socialist camp. When the claim for economic stability was combined with the desire for industrial ‘development,’ market price in South Korea was easily divided into the low agricultural price and the other. As the price of farmers’ products was separated from the general trend of prices in the market, there appeared growing discourses on ‘victimized’ farmers versus ‘well-off’ city people. Feeling desperate at the falling price of grains, a farmer raised a sarcastic question in a newspaper’s Q & A column; “Whenever city people clamoured about rising grain prices, high-ranking ministers resigned from their ministries. On the contrary to this, farmers who form almost 80% of the national population are now making an outcry over the tumbling grain price. Then, can’t we follow such a custom [of resignation] this time?" Other voices were even more direct in their use of the sharp contrast between farmers and city people, publicly saying that “the cheap price of grains brought peace to city people, but exploitation to farmers,” “city dwellers’ cries were of pleasure, but farmers screamed in pain; and “farmers’ bleeding brought in urbanite’s relative profits.”

105 “Nongch’on ŭi pin’gon wi e tosi ŭi pŏnyŏng” [Prosperity of the city at the cost of rural poverty], Kyŏngyang sinmun 4 August 1960.
107 “Kokka wa changgwan saim” [Grain price and the minister’s resignation], Kyŏngyang sinmun 8 April 1954.
108 “Nongmin to hyŏn’gum ŭl kajil su itke” [Enable farmers also to have affordable cash in hand], Kyŏngyang sinmun 4 September 1953.
109 “P’ungjak edo kippŭn morŭn nongch’on, Kokka p’oknak e pimyŏng” [Gloomy farm villages despite a good harvest; Shrieking in grain price collapse], Kyŏngyang sinmun 6 October 1953.
The farmers living in a separated sector from the ‘economic stability’ were being represented as a victimized whole in spatial relation to the city.

The accumulation of industrial capital proceeded rapidly on the other side of the differentiated agricultural sector. In particular, the ‘three white industries (Sambaek sanŏp)’ of sugar, wheat flour, and cotton yarn processing grew swiftly during the 1950s, through which the current Korean Chaebŏl groups (business conglomerates) like Samsung were able to undertake the early accumulation of capital. Some of the heavy chemical industries dealing with fertilizer, cement, and flat glass also grew swiftly at that time, which became the technological and material resources for the growth of chemical industries under the Park Chŏng Hee regime in the 1960s and 70s. Industries oriented towards the manufacture of these goods were actively promoted through the Syngman Rhee regime’s provision of subsidized raw materials and financial privileges. Such a concentrated placement of foreign aid and public funds was made while overlooking the desperation of farmers in need of financial assistance. More fundamentally, the stable growth of the manufacturing industries was indebted to low wages, which was possible through low grain prices that farmers provided for the manufacturing workers. The

110 “Nongch’on ŭi p’in’gon wi e tosi ŭi pŏnyŏng” [Prosperity of the city at the cost of rural poverty], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 4 August 1960.
accumulation of industrial capital in the 1950s depended upon the spatial configuration of agriculture and farmers in which they were excluded from the ideal of ‘economic stability.’

The ‘Crisis’ of Agriculture in the 1960s

No Countryside for Debt-Free Farmers

The worst conditions of exchange imposed on farmers seemed to be improving from the early 1960s.\(^{114}\) This was primarily because farmers did not need to pay grains to the government any longer. The Temporary Land Yield Tax, which had forced farmers to pay tax in grains, changed into the monetary form of payment in 1960. Farmers who had purchased land through the Land Reform had to repay the land prices in grains by instalments, but the term of redemption was also almost over by the end of 1950s.\(^ {115}\)

Nevertheless, farmers could not escape from the fundamental conditions given from the previous decade. Farmers’ debt was an indicator exposing such an ongoing distinction between the agricultural producers and the stable sphere. The Park Chŏng Hee regime which seized power in a military coup in 1961 attempted to present various agricultural policies to


alleviate the rural hardships in need of farmers’ political support. As the first and representative remedy for the issue of rural destitution, the military regime handled the major issue of farm household debts in the slogan of ‘Liquidation of Usurious Loans.’ Yet, the ‘remedy’ did not work. According to the Law on Liquidation of Usurious Loans in Farming and Fishing Villages promulgated in 1961, creditors and farming (or fishing) debtors had to report every claim-obligation relationship that included annual interest rates of over 20%. The government issued an Agricultural Financial Bond to creditors with an interest rate of 20%, and farmers had to repay the principal and the interest of only 12% to the government by instalments over a period of five years (1962-1966). The difference of interest by 8% was supposed to be made up by government funding. Farmers, however, paid little attention to the law. They regarded the practice of reporting as “breaking faith.” Most of all, they had never lived without debts; it was too burdensome for them to create a hostile relationship with local creditors when there was no guarantee for alternatives in the future. The documents collected within the voluntary reporting period was much less than expected, so the timeframe had to be extended. Ironically, this program worked for creditors by repaying even insolvent obligations, whereas the farmers’

116 Yi Hwan-gyu. 1999. “Nongŏch’on korich’ae chŏngni” [The Liquidation of Usurious Loans in Farming and Fishing Village]. In Nongjŏng pansegi ch’ŏngŏn [Witnesses to the Half-Century History of Korean Agricultural Administration], edited by Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwŏn [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. Seoul: Nongnimbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry]. (pp. 178-181)
117 “Korich’ae chŏngni wa nongŏch’on ūi p’yŏjang” [Liquidation of usurious loans and the current state of farming and fishing villages], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 August 1961.
118 “Korich’ae chŏngni wa nongŏch’on ūi p’yŏjang” [Liquidation of usurious loans and the current state of farming and fishing villages], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 August 1961.
119 “Korich’ae chŏngni wa nongŏch’on ūi p’yŏjang” [Liquidation of usurious loans and the current state of farming and fishing villages], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 August 1961.
120 Yi Hwan-gyu. 1999. “Nongŏch’on korich’ae chŏngni” [The Liquidation of Usurious Loans in Farming and Fishing Village]. In Nongjŏng pansegi ch’ŏngŏn [Witnesses to the Half-Century History of Korean Agricultural Administration], edited by Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwŏn [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. Seoul: Nongnimbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry]. (pp. 181-182)
economic status did not improve much.\footnote{121 Yi Hwan-gyu. 1999. “Nongŏch’on korich’ae chŏngni” [The Liquidation of Usurious Loans in Farming and Fishing Village]. In Nongjŏng pansegī chingŏn [Witnesses to the Half-Century History of Korean Agricultural Administration], edited by Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwŏn [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. Seoul: Nongnimbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry]. (pp.188-189, p. 200)

122 Yi Hwan-gyu. 1999. “Nongŏch’on korich’ae chŏngni” [The Liquidation of Usurious Loans in Farming and Fishing Village]. In Nongjŏng pansegī chingŏn [Witnesses to the Half-Century History of Korean Agricultural Administration], edited by Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwŏn [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. Seoul: Nongnimbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry]. (pp. 197-200)} Farmers still had to repay the same amount of principal, and the lower interest rate also became burdensome due to the longer period of repayment with cumulative interest; the total amount of money farmers had to repay was eventually not much different from before the imposition of the Law on Liquidation of Usurious Loans.\footnote{122 Yi Hwan-gyu. 1999. “Nongŏch’on korich’ae chŏngni” [The Liquidation of Usurious Loans in Farming and Fishing Village]. In Nongjŏng pansegī chingŏn [Witnesses to the Half-Century History of Korean Agricultural Administration], edited by Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwŏn [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. Seoul: Nongnimbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry]. (pp. 197-200)}

<Graph 1.1> The Ratio between Private and Public Loans to Farm Households

About 80 to 90% of all farm households were in debt throughout the 1950s, and this situation did not change much even in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{123} Also, they were still getting their loans from private moneylenders at a much higher interest rate. Graph 1.1 shows that the ratio between private loans from curb loan market and public loans from governmental or commercial banks was approximately 8:2 all throughout the 1950s and 60s. In the early 1960s, the ratio slightly changed to about 7:3. This was a passing phenomenon caused by the Park regime’s program for ‘Liquidation of Usurious Loans in Farming and Fishing Villages’ in 1961.

Farmers were alienated from financial benefits. Commercial banks were reluctant to provide loans that would be exposed to the annual fluctuations of the agriculture sector which also bound loan collection to the timeframe of the harvest cycle. Not only the insecure slowness of the financial cycle, but also the meager size of individual farm households’ farmland as security was an obstacle to necessary financial transactions. Yet, almost all farmers needed sizable money in spring every year at the same time. This was because they all needed agricultural funds for seeds and basic facilities, tuitions for their children, and money to buy food in the spring season.\textsuperscript{124} In the end, farmers had to depend upon the non-institutional private money market. Of course, the rate of interest was much higher than that of public banks. The farmers’ overwhelming dependence on private loan market was a reflection of the petty farmers’ isolation from the stable financial system.


The annual interest rate of private loans was much higher than that of public loans. The annual interest rate for private loans was 51.4-61.8% during the 1960s, while the general interest rate for a commercial bank loan was only 15.7-17.5% in the early 1960s and 24-26% after 1965.\(^{125}\) When considering that the industries of manufacturing and foreign trade in particular had greater access to privileged loans whose interest was even lower than the general interest rate of commercial banks at only 6-7% per year,\(^{126}\) the financial disparity between agriculture and non-agricultural sectors was becoming intensified in the continued drive of industrial developmentalism.

**Modernizing Agriculture and the Countryside**

The farmers’ difficulty and frustration led to a rural exodus. The late 1960s was an important turning point in the composition of population. The absolute population of farm households began to decrease in 1967, and the percentage of farm household population went below 50% for the first time in 1969.\(^{127}\) From 1955 to 1965, the migration from rural to urban areas was about 1.5 million people, but 2.5 million people migrated during the next five years between 1965 and

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\(^{125}\) The steep increase in the general interest rate of commercial bank loan in 1965 was resulted from the government’s upward readjustment of bank interest rates for the purpose of raising funds through bank deposit for governmental investment and anti-inflation. Yun Sŏk-pôm, et al., ed. 1996. *Han’guk kŏndae kämyungsa yŏn’gu [The History of Modern Korean Finance]*. Seoul: Segyŏngsa. (pp. 375-379)


The outflow of the younger population was noticeable, and rural areas began to suffer from the lack of labour especially during busy farming seasons.\textsuperscript{129}

The accelerated crisis of agriculture brought about abundant discussions on the ‘concurrent development of agriculture and manufacturing (Nonggong pyŏngjin).’ Agricultural economist Park Jin-hwan, who worked as the President’s economic advisor throughout the 1970s, claimed that “the 1960s was the stage of establishing a foundation for economic modernization by the leading role of manufacturing sector, and the 1970s should become the stage of making industrialization more mature through the improvement of agricultural production.”\textsuperscript{130} For Park, the ‘development’ of agriculture was indispensable to the further growth of the ‘established industrialization,’ and “underdeveloped agriculture would put the brakes on the continuous growth of non-agricultural sectors.”\textsuperscript{131} It was believed that mass-produced grains and raw materials would reduce the cost of industrial production and intensify competitive pricing in the international markets; and more importantly, boosted agricultural production would substitute imports and correct the imbalance of trade; otherwise, it would be a great obstacle to the plan for


export-oriented growth. The critical situation of agriculture was not an issue of differentiated ‘the other sector’ anymore; it was a precarious problem of manufacturing.

The growing productivity of manufacturing through the 1950s and 60s also required rural areas to transform into sound domestic markets with purchasing power. A featured news article titled “Turbulent Business World: Heated Competition for Market in Recession”133 dealt with the cut-throat business conditions of cement, oil-refining, express transportation, and artificial flavour enhancer for 1969 and 1970. These businesses had begun to suffer from the limits of the domestic market at a time when international competition was fierce. In particular, the situation of cement industry was dire. Since the Syngman Rhee regime favoured the Taehan Cement Company with great financial privilege, domestic cement companies had grown fast in a monopolistic system.134 Yet, overproduction and the recession of construction brought about dumping sales from the late 1960s. The cement industry sought to find new buyers, eventually focusing on the prospects of the domestic rural market. On the other side, consumer-electronics industry also had expectations concerning the potential of the rural market.135 The electronics business speculated that gradual electrification following improved income in rural areas would bring about a long-term demand for electronic products. Moreover, keen competition in a small urban market made the rural market look even more attractive. In addition, outdated technology as compared to the then dominant U.S. and Japanese brands required larger domestic markets to

consume less competitive products in the international market; the domestic companies were producing monochrome TVs in the mid-1960s, but the U.S. and Japanese companies had already been manufacturing colour TVs. Reflecting these industrial requirements for the rural market, the Federation of Korean Industries called on the state to increase financial investment in agriculture; the income of farm households stayed at only 60-70% level of urban working households in the late 1960s, and this income level could not allow manufacturers to open new markets, which the rapidly growing industries desperately needed. Now, increasing agricultural productivity and boosting farmers’ income level were perceived as the “safety device” for supporting industrial development and securing a permanent consumer market.

Agriculture, for these purposes, was requested to be ‘developed.’ The industrial capital grew fast by means of differentiating the agriculture and the farmers from the ‘stable economy.’ The established industries, however, now expected high agricultural productivity and a solid rural market to buttress a rapid growth of export-oriented manufacturing. The crisis of agriculture had become the crisis of manufacturing. Discourses on the concurrent development of agriculture and manufacturing reflected wide-spread sympathy for such an urgent issue. On the surface, this ‘turn’ looked like a great shift from an exclusion of agriculture to an embrace. Yet, there was an ongoing episteme based on division and classification between agriculture and manufacturing. The existential mode of agriculture and farmers was still subordinate to the other

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136 “Tosi nongch’on sodŏk kyŏkch’a kŭksim” [Income gap between the city and the countryside becomes severe], Maeil kyŏngje 9 March 1970.
138 “Paramjikhan han’guk kyŏngje miraesang” [Desirable future of Korean economy], Maeil kyŏngje 16 August 1967.
sectors, especially to the ‘development’ of manufacturing industries. Manufacturing was a prerequisite for agriculture, and the conception of economy was always divided so.

Based upon such a hierarchical form of developmentalism, the state initiated a kind of comprehensive development program for agriculture and the countryside under the slogan of ‘rural modernization’ in 1970. This total program was called the New Village Movement (Saemaül Undong). How to reconfigure the relationship between manufacturing and agriculture was central to the New Village Movement throughout the 1970s, the so-called rapid growth period. This was because the so-called rural modernization program was from the beginning designed to be a ‘solution’ to the phasic crisis of industrial capitalism, when the deteriorating economy of agriculture could not sustain the existing mode of unequal exchanges with manufacturing sectors in the market and thus could not be able to provide further nourishment for the internationally expanding domestic capital.
Chapter 2
The Political Economy of the Roof

In the early 1970s, the focus of the New Village Movement (Saemaül Undong) turned to the roofs of the Korean countryside. At the time, rural poverty was often represented through images of a monochromic village landscape populated by dilapidated mud-walled houses crowned with coverings of faded grass thatch. Given the commonality of this trope, replacing the thatched-roofs with something more colourful and more modern was quickly set on as one of the most effective ways of displaying ‘rural transformation’ or the ‘new village.’ Slate was said to be a perfect material for this purpose. In 1973, an article in a business journal expounded on the superiority of slate as a construction material while introducing the growth potential of a slate company: “Slate is very strong, light, convenient, absolutely nonflammable, absolutely water-resistant, and incorrodible by any poisonous gases. Moreover, slate is durable for over 60 years; it is simple to build with; and it saves a large amount of timber and steel frames.”1 By 1978, an astonishing 2,618,000 thatched houses all over the countryside in South Korea had their old thatched-roofs replaced mainly with such an ‘excellent’ construction material.2

Before long, however, people began to raise doubts about the quality of slate roofs. Slate contained 10 to 15% of asbestos, which is currently classified as a class one carcinogen.3 In South Korea, the toxicity of asbestos slate began to be widely known to the public from the

1 “Sangjang kiőp chindan” [Analysis of listed corporations], Hyöndae kyöngje 26 May 1973.
2000s, and since 2011 the government has started to subsidize the demolition of slate roofs. Almost four decades after the nationwide launch of the slate-roofing project, the Saemaül slate roofs have become a considerable danger, one that threatens public health and social capital. In 2010, a newspaper article remarked that “the symbol of the New Village Movement is under demolition.” In another article from 2013, the iconic slate roof was likened to a “monster (Koemul).” This “monster” was not a metaphor especially when one considers the scenes of removal sites where demolition workers wear respirators and other protective gear to shield themselves from the toxic asbestos dust. (Picture 2.1)

According to a government’s survey in 2014, approximately 1,410,000 slate structures are still awaiting cleanup. In 2014, the Ministry of Environment printed a leaflet to provide information on its subsidy program for the removal of slate roofs. The leaflet included the contrasting images of unhealthy slate roofs in grey and healthy new houses in green. (Picture 2.2) On the other side of the government’s campaign, many people criticized the meagreness of subsidy and the slow progress of the removal program; and some of them urged the central government to take more aggressive measures, insisting that the removal of slate roofs in the rural areas should be connected to a “green growth project” or “the second New Village

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5 “Ch’ŏlgŏdoenŭn ‘Saemaŭl Undong sangging’” [The shadow of the New Village Movement: How to deal with a monster, the slate roofs], Kangmin ilbo 29 June 2013.
6 “Saemaŭl Undong ŭi kŭmŭl: Koemul, sŭlleit’u chibung ŭl ŏttŏtk’e” [The shadow of the New Village Movement: How to deal with a monster, the slate roofs], Chosŏn ilbo 30 December 2010.
8 “Aemultanji ro chŏllakhan sŭlleit’ŭ chibung” [‘Slate roofs’ become a nuisance], Naeil sinmun 9 January 2009.
Ironically, all these ways of representing living spaces, as well as the ways these projects are connected within the discourses of economic growth, are almost identical to the logic used back in the 1960s and 70s to promote the slate-roofing in the countryside.

9 “Haru ppalli kǒdōnaeya hal sülleit’ǔ chibung” [‘Slate roofs’ need to be removed immediately], Nongmin sinmun 25 May 2009.
CHAPTER 2

<Picture 2.2> Information Leaflet:  
The Government Subsidy Project for the Removal of Slate Roof

Image from Hwan’gyŏngbu [Ministry of Environment]. 2014. “Sülleit’ŭ ch’öllgŏ chiwŏn saŏp hongbo rip’ullit”  
Slate replaced grass on rural roofs and, to borrow from the article quoted above, became a “monster.” In the end, probably a more eco-friendly material will cause all the slate-roofs to be pulled down someday. Then, can we really flee from the monster? It may be possible to elude asbestos. However, when looking at the déjà-vu-eliciting discourses and spatio-visual representations surrounding the roof-reconstruction in the 1970s and the re-reconstruction in progress now, one can sense within these projects the presence of future monsters that threaten to re-capture us in the same cycle of logic. This chapter will explore such a hegemonic strategy and mechanism of capitalism in which the Saemaŭl Roof Improvement Project took root.

The first section of this chapter will examine the various renderings of living spaces in the countryside and the city. Such spatial representations appeared widely and repeatedly in newspapers and magazines throughout the 1960s and 1970s. As seen in Chapter 1, urban-based manufacturing capital had grown rapidly while farmers had suffered from chronic destitution since the Korean War. During this early industrialization period, farmers living in rural areas were represented as a suffering collective by comparison with urbanites in the city where non-agricultural industries were concentrated. With increasing frequency starting especially in the late 1960s, the differentiated locations’ relative wealth and poverty was expressed through contrasting images of rural and urban space. The images displayed differences explicitly, but did so in a way that often evaded consideration over some of the more ambiguous features of the relationship between the countryside and the city. In particular, the presence of boundary areas or class differentiations inside the city and the countryside often went unnoticed. Rural residents themselves also actively reproduced the dichotomous discourses of the developed city and the underdeveloped countryside, internalizing the way of being viewed by the others. At times, sentiment for nature or nostalgia about pastoral life replaced the negative representations of the countryside, describing the city as a place of pollution and inhumanity; however, there was no
fundamental difference in the sense that the reversed representations still depended upon the discourse of separation between the countryside and the city.

In fact, such dichotomous representations of the countryside and the city were not a unique phenomenon to this period and society. It is not difficult to find identical patterns of description of urban and rural spaces in the so-called peasant literature (Nongmin munhak), which flourished especially during the 1930s in colonial Korea. Voluminous examples in Raymond Williams’ work, The Country and the City, also inform us of quite similar discourses and episteme about the rural and the urban in England that prevailed since the start of the industrialization process there. The ‘pervasiveness’ of this form of spatial representation finds its root in capitalist modernity and in the mode of existence of capitalism, which is sustained by the circular reproduction of evenness and unevenness.

The diametrically contrasting spatial images highlight unevenness and, by doing so, legitimize the forms of evenness that lead to other layers of unevenness. The dichotomous images used to describe the city and the country in Korea at this time did not allow people to recognize the constant relationship between agriculture and manufacturing or the unequal exchange between the two in the market. By highlighting only the consequential images of rural poverty, the spatio-visual representations of the countryside and the city concealed an

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inseparable and exploitative exchange relationship. In this represented disconnection of relationship, the visualized ‘unevenness’ was accounted for solely through references to the low productivity of agriculture and the negligence of farmers. At this juncture, the New Village Movement or the Roof Improvement Project was able to be promoted in the name of “rural modernization,” which itself pointed to the evenness of the city and the countryside. The movement’s slogan, ‘diligence, self-help, cooperation,’ was actually a proclamation that the movement would be conducted by the farmers’ own labour and funds who, as mentioned above, were viewed as responsible for their poverty.

As the second section of this chapter will show, the new slate-roofs, the symbol of modernization and evenness, eroded farmers’ financial status and bolstered the accumulation of capital by particular industries. Government officials forced farmers to replace their thatched roofs mainly with slate, often during the busy farming season. Some economists supported the government’s project through their economic evaluation of slate-roofing. They tried to prove that, in the long-term, farmers’ saved labour from annual or biannual grass-roofing would compensate for the slate-roofing cost and eventually turn into profit. This was the moment when the state’s language of economics began to capture previously untabulated labour as a value-added resource to be exchanged in the market. The meagre amount of government subsidy led farmers to take out loans, and the farmers’ debt capital – their future labour – flowed into the market in exchange for manufactured slate and other construction materials, like in the economists’ numerical expressions. In order to trace back such a flow of farmers’ extracted capital, this chapter will look into the history of two large corporate groups in Korea, Pyŏksan Group and KCC Group, two Chaebŏls that were able to solidify the early foundation for their current business formation through the Saemaŭl Roof Improvement Project in the 1970s.
The Saemaŭl Roof Improvement Project was deeply rooted in the ideologies of development and modernization. The third section of this chapter will examine the dynamics through which the completed roof in and of itself began to strengthen and propagate hegemonic capitalist values. The colourfully painted slate-roofs were first placed in the Korean countryside around highways and tourist sites so as to be displayed most prominently. From there they quickly spread all over the peninsula. The primary coloured roofs stood for the ‘changing countryside’ and were intended to give a strong visual impression to passers-by and rural residents. Towards this end, government officials fastidiously controlled the selection of colours and even shades for each farmhouse, considering colouration and coordination with neighbouring houses. In this way, modernization and developmentalism were systematically expressed on daily spaces; and the countryside became a kind of ‘canvas’ portraying the colourful legitimacy of the military dictatorship. What was called ‘change’ was a visual illusion created by farmers’ debts. However, the core of the illusion was not in the presence of the new roofs, but in the absence of the old ones. Around the completion of the roofing project, the government began to emphasize the necessity of preserving thatched roof houses out of fear of their extinction. Government authorities explained that some of thatched roof houses should remain as historical materials for the education of future generations who would be ignorant of past poverty. The discourse of preservation actually intended to proclaim the complete end of poverty; and it was a powerful aesthetic strategy for propagating the government’s accomplishment of modernization.

Of course, state planning did not permeate into the public without resistance. Confronting government officials’ daily badgering, farmers sometimes delayed the roofing intentionally, and in other instances negotiated with the local government to receive more subsidies. As another effective means of indirect resistance, people expressed their aesthetic
disagreement over the government’s choice of roof colours. Their criticisms on the beauty and
ugliness of the roofs reflected personal aesthetic views, colour tastes, value systems, emotional
memories, practical needs, as well as political positions.

The Countryside and the City

Thatched Roofs and Skyscrapers

The thatched roof house had long been a visual icon of rural areas in Korea, demarcating urban
space from the countryside. A traveler’s account published in a 1965 issue of the 

\textit{Kyŏnghyang sinmun} lamented the rural views of shabby thatched houses spreading beyond a train window.\footnote{“Yŏjŏk” [Excursus (Kyŏnghyang sinmun column)], \textit{Kyŏnghyang sinmun} 20 May 1965.}
The traveller wrote that in former times, the desperate view of the fatherland’s poverty was a
heartbreaking scene for Korean students returning from studying abroad in Tokyo, the capital
city of colonial empire; decades later, these views were still making the travellers of the liberated
fatherland feel a similar sentiment. In this instance of temporal reminiscence about space, the
rural houses had not changed since the Japanese colonial period, held in stagnant and
melancholic time. The thatched houses also drew clear boundaries between the city and the
countryside at the moment when the traveller looked out the train window and wrote, “If one or
two tile roof houses are seen, it means that city or town is not far off there.”

Such a representation of rural space was furthered through delineating the city as a
place of skyscrapers and other vast buildings. Another piece of writing in the same column
described walking through downtown Seoul in 1969. The metropolis was a “startling” space where it was impossible to look at the whole view of high-rising buildings without “raising our nostrils to the air like the muzzles of an antiaircraft gun.” The pedestrian associated the spectacular urban scenery of Seoul with an image of Manhattan that he (or she) had seen once in a picture. This experience gave the observer a feeling of contentment. Yet, soon in turn, the skyscrapers brought up the contrasting image of the miserable countryside as well as deep sympathy for the residents of that area. The countryside was still a place for “meagre houses which had not changed over the decades and whose insides could be viewed through the holes of a glassless door.” In a spatial and emotional process of articulation, the countryside had become diametrically paired with the city.

<Picture 2.3> “What an Odd Bridge It Is!”


13 “Yŏjŏk” [Excursus (Kyŏnghyang sinmun column)], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 29 October 1969.
A cartoon in a farmers’ magazine in 1971 represented this paradigmatic contrast between the countryside and the city. It illustrated the economic disparity between the rural areas (Nongch’on) and the city (Tosi) with an image of a literally ‘unbridgeable’ construct.\(^{14}\) In the illustration, the city was figured as a tall concrete skyscraper while the rural areas are shown as a small thatched roof house. (Picture 2.3) In the image, a causeway connects the isolated rural locations with the city; however, this section of the bridge slants precariously downward. This, what the caption calls, “odd bridge” not only fails to function as a passage to the opposite bank, it acts as a ramp descending into the water. The dysfunction of the bridge is given an explicitly economic dimension through the visualized imbalance of “GNP,” inscribed on the bottom of the span linking the two constructs. GNP (Gross National Product) had frequently been cited in South Korea as a numerical indicator of ‘development’ and was considered a clear marker of a collective objective: the growth of the national economy. Thus, when the cartoon split the holistic concept of gross national product into the rural areas and the urban areas, there was an underlying assumption that posited a rural impediment to the urban contribution to ‘economic development.’ At this juncture, the cartoon’s meaning did not stop at offering compassion to rural destitution; it also constituted an implicit call for rural areas to be restructured, in other words, to make the bridge passable and to allow for the ideal of a balanced and expanding GNP to be achieved.

In the discourses where spatial images represented rural destitution, the ‘solutions’ for poverty were also likely to be found in spatial restructuring. A journalist, O So-baek, realistically described farmers’ meagre living: “It is unusual in agricultural villages that farmers have as

many bedclothes as the number of family members. Three to five people share one or two
blankets together. Many farmhouses have no windows. There is no way for fresh air and
sunshine to enter the house other than through the door. Most of outhouses have no toilet lid. I
don’t know how many farmhouses could have a cupboard. Kitchen utensils are set in disorder on
top of a wood-burning kitchen range.\(^{15}\) For the journalist, the reality of agricultural villages
could be ‘accurately’ reported by revealing their places of living; the actual environment of rural
housing was desperate, and it was in stark contrast to luxurious and bright urban space.
Problematizing this spatial disparity, the reporter concluded that, “It would be worthwhile trying
to make farmers’ apartment houses (Nongmin ap’at’ū) instead of constructing modern apartment
buildings only in cities.” For O So-baek, constructing city-like rural villages appeared to be a
solution to the issues of rural poverty and the difference between the countryside and the city.

**Urban Shanties**

Spatial representations and solutions for the disparity between the two were based solely upon a
clear-cut distinction between the countryside and the city. This clarity left no room for gazing
into the diverse internal layers of space. Rather, it was fashioning a fantasy of the wealthy city
standing in opposition to the poor countryside. The rural village was, however, a place where
different classes lived together, from the majority poor homesteads, who struggled to secure even
basic food staples, to relatively well-off households. These class differences also coexisted with
an array of professional diversity that ranged from full time farm producers to salaried workers,
government officials, and commercial capitalists engaging in agricultural distribution. Such

\(^{15}\) O So-baek. 1970. “Maesŏk’om ūi nun kwa nongch’on” [The Eyes of Mass Communication and the Countryside],
*Nongmin munhwaw* 14 (October): 22-23 [Peasant Culture]. Seoul: Han’guk nongch’on munhwaw yŏn’guhoe [The
Korean Rural Culture Research Society].
representative strategies offered little consideration for the multiple layers of the ‘poor
countryside (or rural areas)’ when represented as the foil to the ‘wealthy city.’ More strategically
and importantly, such diametrically opposed representation covered up the internal problems of
pandemic poverty and slums inside the city.

“On summer nights, I liked falling asleep, counting the numberless stars in the sky
through a gap between the wood boards. But yesterday, I had to pass the whole night
without sleep, huddled up with a blanket in the cold. This was because my baby sister
made a hole with her finger in the window that my daddy had papered with a
newspaper. The cold wind whistled in through the hole fiercely all night.”

The above passage was quoted from an eleven-year-old girl’s diary. The diary book was found
scorched amongst the remains of a burnt-out shanty town in Namsan-dong of Seoul where a fire
destroyed over 469 shanty houses effecting about 2,312 people including 21 deaths and 7 cases
of missing persons, on a January night in 1966. The girl who had written the diary was found
dead hugging her two younger sisters, a nine-year-old elementary school student and a three-
year-old baby who made the finger hole in the newspaper window.

It was reported that, as of the end of June in 1970, Seoul had 187,554 shanty houses.
This number accounted for about a quarter of the total houses (730,000) in Seoul at the time. The
shanty towns in urban areas grew continuously after the liberation of Korea in 1945. Throughout
this time, the government also continued to demolish the illegally built shacks, but people,

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16 Quoted from “Tosi ū kojil p’anjaip” [Shanty house, the chronic disease of the city], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 24 January 1966.
17 “Namsan-dong p’anjach’on e taehwa, Ōjetpam” [Big fire breaks out in shanty town in Namsan-dong yesterday
night], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 19 January 1966.
18 “Tosi ū kojil p’anjaip” [Shanty house, the chronic disease of the city], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 24 January 1966;
“Namsan-dong p’anjach’on e taehwa, Ōjetpam” [Big fire breaks out in shanty town in Namsan-dong yesterday
night], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 19 January 1966.
19 “Pulch’ŏnggwaek p’anjaip” [Shanty house, an unwelcome guest], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 6 July 1970.
desperate for housing, kept rebuilding new dwellings on the previously vacated sites. It was common for the residents to clear sites for houses during daytime, escaping the vigilance of city officials. When it became dark, pillars and roofs were then hurriedly erected. The house usually had a tiny single room and a simple kitchen. The decrepit houses were generally clustered on the slopes of mountains, and thus were called San tongne (mountain neighbourhood). The address of shanty towns often used the expression of ‘San ○○ Pŏnjī’ which meant ‘house number ○○ located on the mountain.’ These neighbourhoods were vulnerable to fire because the wood sheeted buildings were so closely spaced. For the residents, however, a more serious difficulty for daily life was water shortages in the hilly areas. Members from hundreds of households had to line up to draw water from a single village well at daybreak. There are accounts of children as young as five years old in the line, carrying gourd containers. Fire trucks generally called to extinguish fires in the mountain villages, but were also dispatched to supply the districts with drinking water during summer drought periods.


21 “Tosi ú kojil p’anjajip” [Shanty house, the chronic disease of the city], Kyŏnghyang simmun 21 January 1966.

22 “Tosi ú kojil p’anjajip” [Shanty house, the chronic disease of the city], Kyŏnghyang simmun 24 January 1966.
City dwellers’ living conditions were not homogenous. This was occasionally revealed in public information other than the spatial comparison between the city and the countryside. In 1969, an editorial in the *Chosŏn ilbo* requested measures be taken on the slum areas of large cities. It quoted a report produced by the Ministry of Health and Society that found the rate of disease in urban slums was much higher than in rural areas while the rate of recovery was slightly lower. The editorial continued by pointing out that “the more important issue was that the rate of dependency on superstitious treatments such as shamans in Seoul’s slums was more than twice that in backward parts of rural areas at 39.6% and 17.3% respectively.” This editorial illuminated the unevenness inside the ‘wealthy city’ by paying attention to the issues of hygienic welfare in urban slums rather than the holistic distinction between the city and the countryside. However, this did not imply that such a perspective could completely escape from the categorical premise distinguishing the city and the rural areas. In the editorial, the author appealed to readers with a comparison between the urban slums and rural areas with the expression of “the more wretched life of Seoul slums than the life of rural areas.” Likewise, the quoted government data itself was also collected and composed in the comparative format that stressed the contrast between the city and the rural areas.

**Flower and Root**

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23 The binary symbolism of the countryside and the city did not only ignore the internal specificities of the city, but also disregarded the economic differentiation inside different parts of both urban and rural areas. According to an agricultural economist Pak Jin-hwan in 1970, there had been widening gaps in growth between large and small cities and also between different regions. For the economist, many of small or medium-sized cities in local areas were lagging behind the suburban agricultural areas of Taegu metropolis in terms of the rate of growth and change. Such an inter-regional comparison on the rate of economic expansion led him to conclude that the problematic issue was actually the gap between overly expanding Seoul-centered economic zone and the rest of the country rather than between the city and the rural areas. (Park Jin Hwan. 1970. “Charip kyŏngje wa nonggong pyŏngjin” [Self-supporting Economy and the Concurrent Development of Agriculture and Manufacturing]. In *Han’guk kyŏngje palchŏn ŭi iron kwa hyŏnsil* [Theory and Reality of Korea’s Economic Development], edited by Naegak kihoek chojŏngsil [Cabinet Office of Planning and Coordination]. Vol. 4. Seoul: Naegak kihoek chojŏngsil. (p. 223))

By far the most important assumption about the contrasting representation of rural and urban space was exposed through images that produced a perception of the city and the rural areas as separate entities. By using spatial symbolism to illustrate a supposedly unbridgeable economic disparity between the ‘two’ locations, the perception of difference concealed the inter-relationship at work between the two in the circulation of products and capital between agriculture and manufacturing. The displayed wealth of non-agricultural sectors had been deeply indebted to the provision of cheap grains and labour power by the agricultural producers throughout the 1950s and 60s. The stabilization of inflation, which was an important part of the foundation of post-war economic growth, was also possible by farmers’ payment of tax in grains and their unequally priced products in the market. However, this exchange relationship was being concealed with the clear-cut images that emphasized only the consequential ‘underdevelopment’ of the countryside as compared to the ‘developed’ city.

These concealed exchange relationships were occasionally brought to light by critical voices. In a contribution to a farmers’ magazine entitled *Nongmin munhwaw (The Farmers’ Culture)*, a university student by the name of Yu T’ae-sŭng wrote, “It is said that ‘if the city is a flower, the rural area is its root.’ We cannot expect the flower to bloom when its root is decayed. ... I believe there is a certain organic relationship between the city people’s extravagance and the farmers’ destitution.” 25 In a similar tone, at a round-table discussion hosted by the same magazine in early 1971, a peasant activist by the name of Kim Chŏng-kwŏn stated, “I sometimes associate the stairs of an urban building with a pile of farmers’ bones, the dazzling

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neon signs with farmers’ blood, and the excessive luxury with farmers’ flesh.”  
Even if Yu and Kim did not employ statistical data or economic terms, they were clearly criticizing the unequal exchange between agriculture and manufacturing. However, when the “city people’s extravagance” or “excessive luxury” was generalized as a counterpart of farmers’ sacrifice, neither Kim nor Yu could escape from the widespread ‘fantasy’ that equated the relative wealth of non-agricultural industries and locations with the homogeneous richness of the urban residents. 
Another article in *Nongmin munhwa* was critical of inflated advertisements on the lifestyle of city people especially in terms of consumption. According to the article, TV, newspapers, and weekly magazines were creating an “illusion by overstating the consumptive lifestyle in the city,” but such a luxurious life was just “a pie in the sky for most city people (as well as rural residents).” The wealth of the city was not necessarily that of industrial or non-agricultural workers living in the city. The more important aspect was the unequal exchange between agricultural producers and manufacturing capital rather than between farmers and non-agricultural labourers.

The fictive absence of an exchange relationship was accommodated by the internalization of the outsider’s view of rural space. The contrasting representation of the rural areas and the city made it difficult to perceive that the ‘inferior’ rural space was one of the central sources of the industrial wealth. Instead, the rural areas were explained as a homogeneously underdeveloped and disconnected place in relation to the city. This discourse on

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rural areas was often reproduced by agricultural producers living in the countryside. Put differently, farmers adopted the way of being viewed by the others for themselves. For a farmer and village leader by the name of Kang In-gu, the rural villages were so entirely different from the city that he could not stop being surprised; the city was an active place where on all sides tall buildings were under construction and pavements were being laid; fashion style and residential streets in the city were also improving from day to day; the rural villages, on the other hand, showed only unchanging thatched roof houses and poverty that, for centuries, had been passed from generation to generation. Kang’s accounts regarding the ‘surprising’ changes taking place in the city were made in complete contrast with the stagnant rural villages. There was no room for questions as to the relationship or connections behind the familiar distinctions between the city and the rural areas.

Nevertheless, there were differing voices. For another rural resident by the name of An Kyu-ch’ae, the countryside was a place of nature where people could enjoy ordinary pleasure, leisure, and cleanness, whereas the city was full of pollution; “(In Seoul) tall buildings and countless cars first came into sight, and I couldn’t see a ray of sunlight even at noon. It looks like that only high-rise buildings have a certain privilege. The shopping district where electric lamps were necessary even in daytime was thick with visible dust. Factory chimneys were spewing out murky smoke incessantly. Rural villages have no access to electricity. They have no tall buildings, theatres, and cafes, either. However, how much time do the city people enjoy nature’s clean air, beautiful scenery, picnicking in the spring, fishing in the summer, mountain climbing

in the autumn, and reading in the winter?”29 In terms of stressing the positive features of the rural areas, An’s pastoral romanticism was ‘overturning’ the overwhelming representations based on economic comparison. However, his way of looking at the countryside was not far removed from Kang’s ‘internalized’ others’ view mentioned above. Images of rural villages were juxtaposed with contrasting descriptions of urban life in which the placid, cheerful, and clean rural life were correspondingly compared with the hectic, gloomy, and polluted cities. In this structure of representation, rural areas still existed in the comparative form with the city, regardless of whether it was illustrated in a positive or negative light. Such an ‘Arcadian’ viewpoint on the countryside could not escape a framework in which the countryside was identifiable only through comparative relations with the city, keeping the farmers’ space squarely within the gaze of the other and at all times.

Exchange on the Roof

The Saemaŭl Roof Improvement Project

The New Village Movement depended upon the contrasting representations of rural and urban space. When the government launched the New Village Movement as a comprehensive program for rural ‘modernization’ in 1970, one of the movement’s first steps was to replace thatched roofs in rural villages. In the widespread discourses on economic disparity between the agricultural areas and the city, the thatched roof had been emblematic of rural inferiority. The symbolic and comparative illustration on thatched roofs was resonantly expressed also in the official voices of

government authorities overseeing the New Village Movement. The Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs published a thick book entitled *The Great Construction Project of the Nation (Minjok ūi tae yöksa)* in 1979. This book offered a wide range of information and documents on rural housing improvements of the New Village Movement in the 1970s. The introduction opened with the following quote: “The symbol of our poverty and despair for the past centuries was the shabby thatched roof house in the rural villages. The village, where thatched roof houses were clustered chaotically and wretchedly near a crooked entrance or narrow inner roads, was a pitiable scene representing the stagnation, underdevelopment, laziness, and fatalism of our rural society in the past.”

In such a shared portrayal and memory, the single change of remaking straw roofs itself could be a perfect indicator to display the achievement of ‘modernization’ for the rural areas. It could be a clearly visible and powerfully symbolic ‘change.’ Eliminating the thatched roof thus became a top priority target for the New Village Movement. Eventually, the roof improvement project commenced as a leading task of the New Village Movement in the early 1970s, changing thatched roofs into slated or tiled roofs all over the country. Many official documents on the New Village Movement recorded the roof improvement as the “core project (*Haeksim saŏp*)”

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30 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’ae’k kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. *Minjok ūi tae yöksa: Nongch’on chut’ae’ksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]*, Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 57)

31 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’ae’k kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. *Minjok ūi tae yöksa: Nongch’on chut’ae’ksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]*, Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 58)
“igniting project (Chŏmhwa saŏp),”32 or “symbolic project (Sangiingjŏk saŏp),”33 which became “a driving motive and fertilizer for the continuation and acceleration of the Saemaŭl Undong.”34

<Picture 2.4> Thatched Roof Houses 1

Image from Naemubu chibang haenggŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok iï taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 45)

<Picture 2.5> Thatched Roof Houses 2

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjôngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 47)

<Picture 2.6> After Slate Roofing

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjôngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 612)
Roof on the Roof

In the process of replacing thatched roofs across the country, many contentious conflicts happened especially when local officials applied compulsory measures. Roof improvement, as an initial project of the New Village Movement, was conducted on the basis of inter-village competition and became an important criterion for officials’ evaluation.  

‘Saemaŭl officials’ in charge of the New Village Movement were often reprimanded or dismissed for poor performance. The pressure put on the Saemaŭl officials was enormous and their deaths and illnesses from overwork were occasionally reported in newspapers. This pressing atmosphere explained why local officials’ fervent approach to work was often accompanied by coercive means in contrast to the official proposition that these reforms were all voluntary.

The amount of pressure on local officials and subsequent compulsion in changing rural roofs had a functional relationship with the significance of the project’s symbolism. Extreme cases of conflict between the officials and farmers were thus more likely to appear at places where the symbolic implications of the project could be most efficiently presented. In 1974,

36 “Saemaŭl ūl kada (3): Apsŏn maŭl, twiĵin maŭl” [At the sites of New Village Movement (3): Advanced village, lagged village], Tonga ilbo 11 April 1972.
officials in Ch’ŏngwŏn County forcibly removed thatched roofs from two farm houses, which were located on a sight-seeing road near the Mt. Songnisan National Park. This led to disaster when a sudden rain caused flooding in the kitchens and rooms of the exposed houses. This incident brought about public reproach on the compulsory execution of roof improvement. The local government stressed that the house owners had been repeatedly urged to change the roofs in accordance with province planning, but they had repeatedly failed to follow the administrative order. Yet, public sentiment was sympathetic to the farm households’ unfortunate situation because the farmers could not afford to replace their roofs due to financial difficulty and now their only means of shelter was heavily damaged by the local government’s “beautification campaign.” A similar case had taken place in the same county two years earlier. In 1972, Ch’ŏngwŏn County sent officials to force the removal of eleven thatched roof houses in the county. The demolished houses were located near the Ch’ŏngju interchange, and high-ranking officials were supposed to pass through it to participate in an event for encouraging the agricultural sector. Afterwards, the county offered a small amount of compensation for the demolition with a short comment that the houses had been removed because the area belonged to road allowance. The homeless farmers had to stay at their neighbour’s houses or barns for some time.

Local officials’ persistent demands for the replacement of roofs often ended with absurdities. Some old rural houses were so crooked that it was hard to cover the roof with slates in a straight line. In those cases, more time and money was required to finish the roofing work.

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38 “Sasŏl: Ilsŏn haengjŏng ŭi kibon chase – Ch’oga chibung kangible ch’ŏlgŏ choch’ŏ rŭl kaet’an hamyŏnsŏ” [Editorial: Basic attitude of public administration – We deplore the forcible demolition of thatched houses], Chosŏn ilbo 10 May 1974.
39 “Ch’ŏngju int’ŏch’einji pugŭn ch’oga 11-tong kangible ro ch’ŏlgŏ” [Ch’ŏngwŏn County office demolishes 11 thatched houses near Ch’ŏngju interchange by force], Tonga ilbo 13 June 1972.
properly. However, farmers were usually too busy and poor to afford such work. Farmers were also often importunately urged to change their roofs during the busy farming seasons. Abnormal and crude houses were created as a result of farmers’ reluctant reactions to the officials’ importunity. Local villagers coined specific terms to mock such bizarre houses. “Five to six (Yŏsŏt-si o-pun chŏn)” indicated curved new slate houses which looked like a minute clock hand reached at an angle of sixty degrees.40 “Mother in her last month of pregnancy (Maktal agiŏmma)” and “hunchback pillar (Kkopch’u kidung)” were expressions for distorted houses with the walls of round belly shape which stood out especially under a straight slated roof.41 In 1970, the Tonga ilbo put a photo alone in the Society section with the title of, “Tiled Roof Overlaying a Thatched Roof.”42 (Picture 2.7) Although the newspaper did not add a detailed article to the photo, the image by itself effectively explained the farmers’ predicament. The picture illustrated how a farmer living beside a road had no choice but to lay tiles over the thatched roof in a makeshift display to save time during the busiest part of the farming season. Such stop-gap construction to pacify officials lasted until the last year of the roof improvement project. In 1978, Sin’an County planned to change eighty-three roofs of a village within a week in order to receive high-ranking central officials visiting to inspect drought relief measures.43 The short notice in the busiest farming season drove the villagers to resort to last minute measures in order to have good-looking new roofs. However, not long afterwards, the villagers had to re-roof the houses because during the pressing schedule of the original construction, the quickly laid earthen layer placed on the roof did not fill enough the gap between slates and ceiling.

42 “Ch’oga chibung wi e inun kiwa chibung” [Tiled roof overlaying a thatched roof], Tonga ilbo 2 July 1970.
43 “Nop’un saram onda, Pyŏrakch’igi nongga kaeryang” [Big-shots coming, Hurried construction of farm houses], Tonga ilbo 3 June 1978.
Of course, farmers did not always yield to local officials’ will easily. In the final year of the roof improvement project, a bureaucrat who worked in Sŏsan County commented that, “I felt as if I were going into the battlefield when I had to visit the village where I was responsible for roof improvement.”44 For the local official, it was a very stressful experience dealing with “the stubborn” who shouted, “Why do I have to rebuild my roof now? My thatched house has

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had no problem at all for generations.” Sometimes farmers attempted to negotiate with local officials to receive more subsidies. 184 farm households in Asan County firmly refused to change their roofs, though many officials from different local offices in the county came by turns in an attempt to change their mind and hurry up the construction. Reluctantly the county offered to pay all the expenses for improving roofs, and the villagers agreed to it at last. It was also reported that a farmer in the same county caused further trouble by not starting construction even after receiving available loans and subsidy.

Facing such ‘formidable’ farmers, officials sometimes had to appeal to their emotions or employ monetary incentives rather than use unilateral compulsory measures. It was also the market language of production and consumption that persuaded farmers to understand why slate-roofing was a good thing and worth the investment of their labour and money for the ‘profitable’ project. Governmental institutions and agricultural economists produced a range of reports on the economic effect of the roof improvement in the rural villages. According to an economist’s evaluation on the rate of earnings in 1976, roof improvement would generate profit in the end. Under the assumption that a thatched roof needed to be replaced every year or other year, the economist calculated that the cost of roofing materials would be compensated for largely through the future labour saved from the annual re-roofing. To explain rapid ways to make up for the expenditure (consumption) on the relatively expensive manufactured slate, the focus of the

analysis soon shifted to more productive allocation of labour power especially to the activities of agricultural production such as cultivation, the rearing of livestock, the production of straw goods, improving the soil, and public works. Farmers had been accustomed to roofing their thatched houses with new grass after the busy harvest period. This previously ‘uncounted’ off-season labour began to be captured now as a value-added resource to be exchanged, especially with manufactured goods like slate in the market. At this juncture, the discourse of agricultural production surrounding rural roofs located its meaning in the system of exchange between manufactured goods and agricultural labour.

Roofing with Debts

The roof improvement project was ‘officially’ completed in 1978. In a span of seven to eight years, 2,618,000 thatched houses had their old roofs replaced mainly with slate or tile. In 1979, one government publication on the campaign asserted that the roof improvement project “cast off the old skin of rural village,” “developed the spirit of self-help and enterprise among farmers,” and “contributed to the rural economy.” The Saemaül roof improvement project was now being propagated as a monumental symbol of rural development. However, the colourful roofs were a visual illusion of development achieved through the imposition of considerable financial and labour burdens on the farmers.

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50 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’æk kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ūi taeōksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 150)
For most farm households, the roofing was obviously a burdensome task that required individual farmers to endure financial hardships in addition to administrative pressures. The government had unclear guidelines stating that those farm households who could afford to improve roofs for themselves should cover all the expenses, and the others would be subsidized for partial cost of building materials. Only a small number of farm households were capable of putting necessary materials and labour in roofing and most farmers could not finish the work without external loans or assistance. In the case of Wŏnsŏng County, when considerable number

of farm households completed roof improvement in 1971, only 10% of them were able to pay all the expenses from their own pockets and the other houses had to rely on high interest loans.\textsuperscript{52}

The government’s subsidy and loans were often not enough, and farmers had to make up for the lack with their own meagre savings or other sources of loans and income. According to a report that analysed the real cost of roofing in Sin’an County as of 1972, the expense of changing thatched roof into slates on a three-room house (82.6-99.2 m$^2$) totalled about 59,300 won, and each farm household had to spend approximately 35,000 to 45,000 won from their savings or other sources of funds immediately.\textsuperscript{53} Specifically, the total expense included roughly 90 pieces of slates per house (33,300 won in discount price for group), timber (8,000 won), roof ridges (15,000 won), and wages for two technical experts (3,000 won). Necessary cement and farmers’ own labour were not counted in the total sum. The farmers were allowed to get a loan of 10,000 won with a governmental subsidy of 5,000 won, or take out a loan of 20,000 won without a subsidy. The government support accounted for less than 10 percent of the total expense on average. Based on a simple calculation that considers the roofing expenses in terms of the farmers’ most available commodity, the entire cost farmers had to shoulder immediately was almost equal to ten bags of unhulled rice at a price of 4,000 won per bag.\textsuperscript{54} It was also about 10 percent of the gross annual income per farm household (429,000 won) as of 1972.\textsuperscript{55} Considering that the expenses for agricultural management – seeds, fertilizers, agrichemicals, machines and

\textsuperscript{52} “Saemaŭl ūl kada (4): Chipko nŏmgyŏya hal saryedŭl” [At the sites of New Village Movement (4): Some cases we need to address], \textit{Tonga ilbo} 12 April 1972.
\textsuperscript{53} “Saemaŭl ūl kada (4): Chipko nŏmgyŏya hal saryedŭl” [At the sites of New Village Movement (4): Some cases we need to address], \textit{Tonga ilbo} 12 April 1972.
\textsuperscript{54} “Saemaŭl ūl kada (4): Chipko nŏmgyŏya hal saryedŭl” [At the sites of New Village Movement (4): Some cases we need to address], \textit{Tonga ilbo} 12 April 1972.
implements, feedstuffs, rent, wages, costs of upkeep, and the like—totalled 75,000 won per farm household on average in 1972.\textsuperscript{56} The roof improvement, whose immediate cost was equivalent to more than half of the yearly farm management expenditure, was not a trivial household chore especially for destitute farmers. Sympathizing with the farmers’ difficulties, a 1972 article in the \textit{Tonga ilbo} wrote, “Weak pillars cause worries if they could support a new slated roof, but debts give more anxiety.”\textsuperscript{57}

**Slate Chaebös**

In contrast to the farmers’ financial difficulties, the slate industry grew drastically in the 1970s. Large slate manufacturers such as Han’guk (current Pyŏksan Group), Kūmgang (current KCC Group), Ssangyong, Tongyang, Cheil, Taehan, and Koryŏ all enjoyed rapid capital accumulation through the roof improvement project in the countryside.\textsuperscript{58} As the roofing in the rural villages was almost completed in 1978, the slate industry went into decline.\textsuperscript{59} Yet by this time, companies such as Han’guk and Kūmgang had already finished solidifying the early foundation for their current structure as large conglomerates (Pyŏksan and KCC Group Chaebös).\textsuperscript{60}


\textsuperscript{57} “(Sajin) Ch’oga chibung ŏl sullit’ŭ ro pakkun’n chagŏp e yol ŏl olim’un ënŭ Saema’il chagŏpchang” [(Photograph) A construction site for the New Village Movement where villagers are fervently replacing thatched roofs with slates], \textit{Tonga ilbo} 12 April 1972.

\textsuperscript{58} “Han’guk Sullit’ŭ, sullit’ŭ tæil such’ul pon’gyŏkhwa” [Han’guk Slate Company’s full-scale exporting of slates to Japan], \textit{Maeil kyŏngje} 4 August 1973; “Sullit’ŭ ʾŏpyke p’anmaejŏn yesang” [Sales war to break out in slate business circle], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 13 June 1974; “Sullit’ŭ ʾŏpyke samp’ajŏn yesang” [Three-cornered sales war to start in slate business circle], \textit{Maeil kyŏngje} 5 December 1974.

\textsuperscript{59} “Sullit’ŭ ʾŏpyke kadongryul chŏha” [Slate industry circle marks a decline in operation rate], \textit{Maeil kyŏngje} 17 June 1978.

Han’guk Slate Industrial Company started its business in 1962 when the company’s founder Kim In-dûk, one of the largest theatre owners in the 1950s, took over a slate factory in Seoul.\textsuperscript{61} The slate factory was originally run by Asano (淺野) Cement Company during the colonial period and was later vested to the South Korean government after liberation.\textsuperscript{62} Kim In-dûk’s Han’guk Slate experienced swift business growth with the boom of slate-roofing in the countryside in the early 1970s. In Kim’s “My Notes of Company Management” in 1974, he wrote: “By the launch of the New Village Movement, the usefulness of slate has been verified. This has brought about today’s formation of Han’guk Slate Group, which centers on Han’guk Sülleit’û (slate manufacturing in Seoul) as my company group’s parent body and consisted of the other affiliates such as Han’guk Kônôp (construction industry), Tongyang Mulsan (Western tableware manufacturing), Kûktong P’il’t’ô (filter manufacturing), Han’guk Yunibaek (electronic calculators), Tongyang Hûnghaeng (theatre), Taeyông Hûnghaeng (theatre), and Cheil Sülleit’û (slate manufacturing in Pusan).”\textsuperscript{63} Business magazines and newspapers paid much attention to the company’s success in their analytical sections for the listed corporations. \textit{Hyŏndae kyŏngje (Contemporary Economy)} reported that the sales of Han’guk Slate in 1972 marked an increase of 291.7\% compared with the previous year\textsuperscript{64}; \textit{Sanôp kyŏngje (Industrial Economy)} wrote that Han’guk Slate had 60\% domestic market share and its “enviable business boom” would continue.

\textsuperscript{61} Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk sŏnsaeng hoegap kinyŏm munjip palgan wiwŏnhoe [Publication Committee for Essay Collection in Honor of Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk’s 60\textsuperscript{th} Birthday]. 1975. \textit{Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk sŏnsaeng hoegap kinyŏm: Nam podaapsŏn saram i toerira [Essay Collection in Honor of Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk’s 60\textsuperscript{th} Birthday: Take the Initiative]}. Seoul: Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk sŏnsaeng hoegap kinyŏm munjip palgan wiwŏnhoe. (pp. 133-134)

\textsuperscript{62} Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk sŏnsaeng hoegap kinyŏm munjip palgan wiwŏnhoe [Publication Committee for Essay Collection in Honor of Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk’s 60\textsuperscript{th} Birthday]. 1975. \textit{Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk sŏnsaeng hoegap kinyŏm: Nam podaapsŏn saram i toerira [Essay Collection in Honor of Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk’s 60\textsuperscript{th} Birthday: Take the Initiative]}. Seoul: Pyŏksan Kim In-dûk sŏnsaeng hoegap kinyŏm munjip palgan wiwŏnhoe. (p. 134)


\textsuperscript{64} “Sangjang kiôp chindan” [Analysis of listed corporations], \textit{Hyŏndae kyŏngje} 26 May 1973.
with the springboard of the New Village projects, and evaluated that Han’guk Slate had just joined the ranks of *Chaebol*.

Predicting that the rural roofing would be completed soon, Han’guk Slate Group began to prepare for the post-roofing market. In an interview with *Sŏul kyŏngje* (*Seoul Economy*) in 1974, Kim In-dŭk stressed: “The Roof Improvement Project is still an important assignment, but the fundamental structure of houses should be reconstructed from now on in terms of resource saving.” At the time of the interview, the company was already investing in the diversified production of construction materials, expanding its business areas to more comprehensive industry of construction. *Sŏul kyŏngje* (*Seoul Economy*) commented on such a tactical shift of business, writing: “He [Kim In-dŭk] cannot experience business recession because he himself creates market demand as well as national profits.” Affirming this observation, Han’guk Slate Group (current Pyŏksan Group *Chaebol*) continued to grow until the South Korean IMF currency crisis in the late 1990s, increasing its affiliates up to 17.

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66 “Kyŏngjein int’ŏbyu: Kim In-dŭk” [Interview with businessmen: Kim In-dŭk], *Sŏul kyŏngje* 2 July 1974.
67 “Han’guk ŭi pijinisŏ kŭrup: Han’guk Sŏlet’ŭ Kŭrup p’yŏn” [Korea’s business groups: Han’guk Slate Group], *Kyŏngyŏng sinmun* 15 March 1974.
68 “Kyŏngjein int’ŏbyu: Kim In-dŭk” [Interview with businessmen: Kim In-dŭk], *Sŏul kyŏngje* 2 July 1974.
69 “Pyŏksan, Pyŏksan Kŏnsŏl p’asan pulttong t’wilka kkŭngkkŭng” [Pyŏksan Group fears the aftereffects of Pyŏksan Construction’s bankruptcy], *Asia kyŏngje* 3 April 2014.
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<Picture 2.8> Slate Factory

Image from KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 131)

<Picture 2.9> Sections of Slate Piece

Image from KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 124)
Kūmgang Slate Industrial Company was established in 1958 by Chŏng Sang-yŏng, the youngest brother of the Hyundai Group Chaebŏl’s founder Chŏng Chu-yŏng. The slate company was in dire financial straits until the late 1960s due to costs involved in the construction of a new factory. It was the government’s roof improvement projects that saved the company from these financial difficulties. As explained in one of the company’s official publications, “As the Saemaǔl roof improvement project expanded to all over the country after the early 1970s, demand for slate showed an explosive increase. ... This period was the most prospering days of Kūmgang Slate since its establishment.” Kūmgang Slate’s business growth was outstanding especially from the mid-1970s, however, the company’s financial status began to improve already in the early 1970s; from 1970 to 1973, the company’s sales of slate showed an annual average growth of over 50%.

Kūmgang Slate’s marketing strategy toward farmers had to be a little more aggressive given that Han’guk Slate occupied 60% of the slate market share. Targeting farmers more directly, Kūmgang Slates advertised its products extensively in the countryside with a slogan saying “Rural roofs in the 1970s use slate.” (Picture 2.10) The product advertisements always displayed before and after illustrations of roofing. (Picture 2.11) As a means of advertising

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70 KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 118)
71 KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 146)
72 KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 157)
73 Total Sales and Net Profit of Kūmgang Slate Industrial Company, 1970-1973 (Currency: Korean won)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Sales</th>
<th>Net Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1,878,401,000</td>
<td>16,904,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2,690,090,000</td>
<td>49,935,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>4,284,701,000</td>
<td>159,851,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>6,443,558,000</td>
<td>584,113,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source from KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 161)
Kŭmgang Slate’s products more efficiently, the company also made a promotional film for the
government’s roof improvement project with the support of the Ministry of Home Affairs.\(^74\)
(Picture 2.12) The 15 minute-long film showed the procedure of slate-roofing step by step. The
government assisted in distributing the film to 275 local cities and counties all over the country
so that farmers could watch it in local village halls. When the company name ‘Kŭmgang’ clearly
appeared in the government-sponsored New Village campaign movie, farmers accepted
Kŭmgang’s slate as an officially accredited product. In relation to the government’s cooperation
during this period, Kŭmgang Slate’s company history wrote, “The central government regularly
investigated the progress of the Saemaṵl roof improvement project by the instruction of the
President. Local government offices urged the owners of farm houses in their areas of
responsibility to improve the thatched roofs. Mayors and county governors threw themselves into
the task of securing the sufficient quantity of slate with enthusiasm. The purchase orders of local
offices were always rushed to slate manufacturers at the same time.”\(^75\)

In the same way that the Han’guk Slate Group shifted its corporate strategy in the mid-
1970s, Kŭmgang Slate Industrial Company (current KCC Group Chaebŏl) also made an effort to
diversify their products and expanded into more comprehensive construction industry around the
same time.\(^76\) In the mid-1980s, the company became a representative corporate group that
produced a wide variety of construction materials in South Korea. There was no doubt that the
slate-based capital of the 1970s enabled such a swift growth and increase of affiliates. According
to a government press release on domestic corporate groups subject to limitations on cross-

\(^74\) KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. *KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]*. Seoul: KCC. (p. 158)
\(^75\) KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. *KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]*. Seoul: KCC. (p. 157)
\(^76\) KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. *KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]*. Seoul: KCC. (p. 164)
shareholdings in 2014, KCC Group Chaebol was ranked 33rd in the size of total assets in the private sector, while Samsung Group was ranked first and Hyundai Motors Group second.  

On the other side of these large slate makers, local retailers and construction technicians also accumulated considerable wealth, producing a phenomenon that could be called ‘rural legends.’ A Mr. Kim opened a retail store for a slate manufacturing company in Masan City at the very beginning of the roof improvement project, and in roughly six years he was able to set up his own construction company. A Mr. Ko, who was “unskilled ‘C level’ carpenter,” became the second wealthiest person in his village seven years after he started to specialize in slate construction. In another instance, an extremely poor farmer by the name of Chang Chông-sik went to a city to learn slate-roofing, and earned enough money to buy three majigi (patch) of his own rice paddy in only three years. In 1978, a newspaper called both of the manufacturing companies and the successful individuals “slate Chaebols,” the former literally and the latter figuratively.

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78 As the slate sales boomed, retailers competed with each other. At last, retail stores did not just stay in the nearby town areas, but moved into around the rural villages to get orders. (“Nongch’on sae p’ungsoktok (150): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (9), Sülleit’u chaebŏl” [New trend in the countryside (150): Housing revolution (9), Slate Chaebol conglomerates], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 27 May 1978.)
79 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsoktok (150): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (9), Sülleit’u chaebŏl” [New trend in the countryside (150): Housing revolution (9), Slate Chaebol conglomerates], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 27 May 1978.
80 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsoktok (150): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (9), Sülleit’u chaebŏl” [New trend in the countryside (150): Housing revolution (9), Slate Chaebol conglomerates], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 27 May 1978.
81 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsoktok (150): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (9), Sülleit’u chaebŏl” [New trend in the countryside (150): Housing revolution (9), Slate Chaebol conglomerates], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 27 May 1978.
CHAPTER 2

<Picture 2.10> Product Advertisement of Kŭmgang Slate Industrial Company 1

Image from KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 147)

<Picture 2.11> Product Advertisement of Kŭmgang Slate Industrial Company 2

Image from KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 160)
<Picture 2.12> Promotional Film for the Saemaül Roof Improvement Project (Filmed by Kūmgang Slate Industrial Company and Sponsored by the Ministry of Home Affairs)

Image from KCC 50-yŏnsa p’yŏnch’an wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee for Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. 2009. KCC 50-yŏnsa [Fifty Years of KCC Corporation]. Seoul: KCC. (p. 159)
Aesthetics of Colourful Roofs

A Canvas of Development

The Saemaül Roof Improvement Project was firmly based upon the contrasting representation or symbolism that distinguished ‘underdeveloped’ rural space and ‘flourishing’ urban space. This image strategy played the role of concealing the unequal and constant exchange relationship between agriculture and manufacture. Simultaneously, however, as seen from the process how the extracted capital flowed into slate industry through the reconstructed farmers’ roofs, such a clear-cut image of unevenness functioned to maintain and reinforce the unequal exchanges between the countryside and the city in the market. In this capitalist mechanism of image strategy, the agricultural sector continued to provide fundamental resources for the growth of manufacture industries throughout the post-war industrialization.

The ideology of development and modernization was deeply rooted in every phase of this mechanism: in the production of the contrasting spatial discourses and the reproduction of the unequal exchange. The new roofs were a very concrete and microscopic product of this constantly renewed unevenness, but at the same time they became an efficient and powerful means for strengthening the very hegemonic capitalist ideology, particularly through colours. Slated or tiled roofs, painted in different primary colours, presented a strong visual image of a changing countryside vis-à-vis the monochromatic landscape of faded straw. In particular, villages near highways and principal roads became literally ‘canvases’ portraying the rapid development of rural area.

The initial investment and administrative guidance in roof improvement was deliberately focused on rural villages located along the highways, main roads, railroads, and
scenic spots where the roofs would be shown off most effectively. At first, the capped slates or tiles were randomly painted in loud red, blue, or yellow colours. However, these shades led to the issues of disharmonious colour combinations. For instance, a mountain village in Ch’ŏngyang county became known as “bier village (Sangyŏ maül)” because the painted roofs looked like the colourfully decorated traditional biers on which a coffin is placed. The central government started to spread manuals instructing how to make a harmonious coloration of roof and wall, offering limited shades and combinations of colours. (Picture 2.13) County offices also gradually tightened control over colour choice in each village. With such a dense and microscopic power deciding even the colour shade of a farmer’s roof, developmentalism and modernization was loudly but systematically expressed on daily spaces all over the countryside.


83 The villagers painted the flat sides of slated roofs in green and the edges in red. (“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (147): Chuŏg pyŏnhyŏk (6), P’eint’ŏch’il” [New trend in the countryside (147): Housing revolution (6), Painting], Kyŏngyang sinmun 18 May 1978)


CHAPTER 2

<Picture 2.13> Recommended Coloration of Roof and Wall

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ūi taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksan [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 388)
<Picture 2.14> Roof Painting 1

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjöngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok i taejoksa: Nongch’ on chut’aeks [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 390)

<Picture 2.15> Roof Painting 2

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjöngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok i taejoksa: Nongch’ on chut’aeks [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 613)
Preserving Thatched Roofs

The height of the developmentalist propagation was a discourse on the ‘preservation of thatched houses.’ In 1978, the final planned year of the roof improvement project, the Ministry of Home Affairs ordered local government offices to look for thatched roof houses and villages worth preserving and to designate them as protected districts. This order was based on a prospect that thatched roof houses would soon disappear from South Korea completely. This ‘concern’ was expressed through the expression of nationalist affection for thatched roof houses in the rural villages; the disappearing straw roof was now described as an emblem of, “the spirit and emotion of our ancestors,” “the unique flavour and fragrance of our nation,” and “the precious cultural legacy of long history.” The government’s announcement was, however, rather closer to a kind of paradoxical proclamation of pride: ‘a complete escape from poverty.’ Even though the thatched roof house was embellished with metaphysical rhetoric of nostalgia, at the same time it was still expressed as “the symbol of rural poverty.” The thatched roof houses had to be preserved as “historical material” that could teach about the ‘past poverty’ as well as traditional culture in the time when “shadow of thatched houses had already vanished away even in children’s magazines.”

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86 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi tae’yŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 373-374)
87 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi tae’yŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 373-374)
90 “Ch’oga ŭi pojon” [Preservation of thatched house], Sŏul sinmun 26 September 1978.
Shortly after the central government’s announcement, each of provincial government offices made their own detailed plans for “the revival of thatched roof house” by sending local officials to search for candidate villages. An owner of a thatched roof house was amazed to discover that his house was introduced on TV as a part of the building preservation program. After his initial amazement wore off, the house owner recollected that he had to appeal to avoid roof improvement a couple of years before. Smiling bitterly, he quoted an old Korean saying, “Give the disease and offer the remedy.” Yet, most people felt “astonished at how much things had changed (隔世之感, Kyŏksejigam).” The illusive image of ‘development’ spread widely at such a moment, when people recognized the ‘absence’ of the old thatched roofs through the public discourse of preservation, and they communicated diverse sentiments toward the ‘astonishing change’ that suddenly seemed to require an organized protection of thatched roofs.

What the discourse of preservation confined in museum-like spaces was, however, an image of poverty, not the poverty itself. The improvement project of thatched roofs was grounded in spatio-visual representation that highlighted unbridgeable disparity between the countryside covered with thatched roofs and the city in full of modern buildings. There was little consideration for the constant unequal circulation of products and surplus values behind this relative poverty and wealth. In such an excessive emphasis on only distinctive appearance, the slated roofs could be seen as a visual indicator of rural changes that narrowed the spatial gap. Yet, the more fundamental issue of rural poverty was located in the exchange relationship between agriculture and manufacturing which, in the process of covering roofs emblematic of rural destitution with farmers’ own resources and effort, was concealed.

92 “Pyŏng chugo yak chugo” [Give the disease and offer the remedy], Tonga ilbo 8 June 1979.
93 “Ch’oga pojon” [Preservation of thatched house], Chungang ilbo 26 September 1978.
Beauty and Ugliness

The Saemaŭl roof improvement project was such an all-encompassing image strategy that it extended to roof colour tones and arrangements in each village. The new colourful roofs projected the splendid image of development especially along the expanding highways all over the country. Another way to use the new roofs was to make people reproduce nostalgic discourses about the disappeared ‘poor old roofs,’ which paradoxically assumed the completion of development. However, this did not mean that the government’s control of roof colours permeated into the villages without any objections from the residents or its developmentalist propaganda attained everyone’s agreement.

The government’s ‘official’ aesthetic sense was often in conflict with house owners. The farmers’ disagreements were the distinctive reflections of numerously different personal senses of beauty. To express aesthetic dissatisfaction was also a very tactical choice by farmers resisting the state’s unilateral projects while avoiding outright confrontation. In 1977, Asan County officials suggested that Buksu-3 village and Kongsu-4 village paint roofs within five colours of dark green, dark grayish-green, greenish-blue, dark red, and scarlet “to blend in their surroundings.” To supervise the county office’s ‘suggestion’ for each household, an official visited a Mr. Yi’s house in Kongsu village and recommended that his roof be painted in dark red colour to match the neighbouring houses. Yet, the colour did not suit the taste of Mr. Yi’s wife. She intensely objected to the unwanted colour leading to the “embarrassment” of the county official. It is not known if the woman eventually submitted to the official’s administrative colour sense or firmly maintained her taste for coloration.

94 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (147): Chugŏ pyŏnhŏkk (6), P’eint’ŭch’il” [New trend in the countryside (147): Housing revolution (6), Painting], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 18 May 1978.
Aesthetic criticisms about rural roofs poured in from all quarters. At least in terms of drawing broad attention to governmental activities, the roof reform could not have been more successful, especially when compared to other forms of propagation. The criticisms often borrowed foreigners’ voices that praised the traditional beauty of Korea and pointed out the ugliness of coloured new roofs bluntly. Newspaper editors wanted to highlight that ‘even foreigners’ felt sorry for the destruction of thatched roofs. This was also a safer way of voicing opposition during a time when people were careful of criticizing the government’s main policy directly. For Edward Poitras, an American missionary and professor of the Methodist Theological University in Korea, the rural houses coloured in primary red, blue, and yellow were “destroying and tearing up the beautifully unique landscape of Korea.”95 “The rural Korea was an oriental painting itself with harmonious delicate colours,” he regretfully described, “It originally featured humane qualities in a good combination of people and nature.” He associated the changed rural landscape with “a kids’ comic book printed in garish colours” or “a wrinkled old woman’s face putting on powder and rouge.” His criticism was not just based on anxiety about the ‘devastation of rural Korea’s unique and humane beauty.’ Poitras was also skeptical about the practical meaning of roof ‘improvement,’ which changed only roofs into flashy red slates without touching the sloping mud-plastered walls and the poor sanitation and heating facilities. A German diplomatic official in Korea, Michael Engelhard, also wrote that the thatched roofs were a perfect match for the natural environment, whereas shabby houses in pink were just “ugly and good-for-nothing.”96 For the diplomat, disappointed at the colourful display of rural areas, the most beautiful place in Korea was located on the roughest road where it was

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95 “Ppalgan chip, p’aran chip, noran chip” [Red house, blue house, and yellow house], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 12 April 1972.
96 “Han’gukmi e taehayŏ” [Regarding the beauty of Korea], Tonga ilbo 20 July 1972.
Sometimes, professional artists buttressed this aesthetic-based resistance with their authoritative criticisms. Kim Hwa-kyŏng, who had painted rural landscapes with thatched roof houses as a professional artist of Oriental drawing, wrote in a newspaper his displeasure about the new rural roofs. He appreciated that traditional thatched houses were Korea’s cultural assets, themselves artworks full of delicate craftsmanship and wisdom. From “the eyes of a fine artist,” especially the line of thatched-roofs harmonized well with the ridge line of back hills, whereas the slated roofs in primary colours made an alien landscape with their surroundings. The house in primary colours was a site of ‘disconnection’ where ancestral aesthetics and culture could not be handed down among the people. It was hard for the artist to imagine that such an ‘alien’ house was the place where “a national people with five thousand years’ history” were living inside. Roofs, where ‘ugly underdevelopment’ had been symbolized, now for some represented the values of national history and identity in the views of beauty.

Between Nostalgia and Development

The critical evaluation of the colourful roofs was often rooted in a series of complex emotions relating to a sense of loss of place, specifically a sense of losing one’s old hometown (Kohyang). In the summer of 1977, Cho Min-jong, a resident of Seoul, had a chance to visit his relatives in the countryside while on vacation. He had grown up in the rural village during the Korean War
and prior to his departure Cho greatly anticipated his return. He was lost in old memories of climbing a persimmon tree to pick the fruit in the back hills and catching minnows in the front stream. When he arrived at the village entrance, however, all of his anticipation and excitement turned into “disappointment and confusion.” The nostalgic landscape in his memory had completely disappeared with all the changes. Most of all, “the unbecoming roofs in primary colours” made him feel heavy and stuffy. He explained his emotion as “Sŏpsŏpham (regret or disappointment)” coming from “the loss of my beautiful childhood and home town.” Yet, he could not deny that “the change of thatched roofs into slate or zinc roofs was the development of village at any rate.” Still, his feelings of loss were further tangled when combined with the notion of ‘development.’

A little more ‘resigned sigh’ was heard from another resident of Seoul by the name of Cho Yŏn. On a clear Sunday in 1972, Cho Yŏn went on a visit to her mother-in-law’s place with her husband and children. The house in the countryside was newly roofed with grey slates. Her mother-in-law asked her how the new roof looked, adding that she taken out a loan to have the work done. “It looks so great!” Cho answered. However, she actually “felt like crying from an uncontrollable turbulence of emotion, as if something important had been lost and a cozy home town had been stolen.” She preferred the antique beauty of the former thatched roof. The slated roof looked shallow. Yet soon her sense of loss ended with a twisted and ‘compromised’ aspect; “It is a little disappointing that the Saemail Undong is actually meant to remove thatched roof houses that I like, but if this could lead to a removal of a multilayered poverty from our rural villages, I’d not mind even if I lose my cozy snug home town.” Rural roofs were embracing an

99 “Ch’oga chibung” [Thatched roof], Tonga ilbo 30 May 1972.
aesthetic sense mixed with the emotions of loss on one side, and a sense of resignation resonated with the values of development on the other side.

Reflecting diverse esthetical tastes and experiences, there were also different voices applauding the ‘beauty of colourful roofs.’ For one reporter, a seaside village in Ongjin County, where every house was painted in primary red, blue, or yellow colours, brought up an image of “a resort town in an advanced country.”\textsuperscript{100} Another village located near a national highway on the southern coast was acclaimed by the local inhabitants as “rainbow town (\textit{Mujigye maŭl})” especially when, in 1971, it was designated as one of initial model towns and compared with other neighbouring villages.\textsuperscript{101}

In 1978, a farmer by the surname of Kim from Ich’ŏn County expressed his approval of the changed roofs in a more unique way, saying, “These days young women don’t pester parents to repair their houses when they get married.”\textsuperscript{102} Kim applauded the aesthetic and practical function of colourfully slated new roofs. His appreciation of new roofs was based upon his experiences of observing and participating in the important events of his neighbours’ life. A young bride would have expected their wedding ceremony to be the most splendid moment in her life. Listening to the daughter’s desire to decorate the house, poor farming parents would have been much more worried about money. Kim might have also shared his neighbours’ anxiety at the drinking table. In his personal memory, however, such a pitiable but common experience

\textsuperscript{100} “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (151): Chugŏ pyŏnlhyŏk (10), 5-saek kaetmaŭl” [New trend in the countryside (151): Housing revolution (10), Five-coloured seaside village], \textit{Kyŏnghyang sinmun} 29 May 1978.
did not repeat after the roof improvement. For villagers including the ‘brides-in-waiting,’ the slated or tiled roof looked neat and clean.

The slated roofs could be also supported by a kind of anti-romanticism in a form of counter criticism over an aesthetic views on rural villages and thatched roof houses. For an editorial writer of the Kyŏnghyang sinmun, the thatched roof houses might have had the plain beauty like an Oriental drawing, but it was necessary to perceive that “poverty was nestling in the beauty.”103 A stronger critical voice came from a graduate student by the surname of Kwŏn, who had been interested in rural destitution. For Kwŏn, the anxiety about slated roofs was only another name for bucolic and reactionary romanticism, which would prevent rural villages from developing further.104 In a practical sense, the thatched roof houses had to be destroyed if they caused daily inconvenience and obstructed comfortable life in the countryside. According to his ‘hypercriticism,’ such nostalgic romanticism was linked to a political ideology and selfish desire. “The widely acclaimed virtue of rustic simplicity and beauty is likely to turn into an ideology proliferating political ignorance and conservative values,” he remarked, “It is also the product of a deep desire (Yongmang) to feel nostalgia for nature and find a protective shelter in rural villages.” In such an agreement and accentuation on the way and value of rural development, even relatively critical positions about the government’s agrarian policies could be supportive of the roof improvement, especially when the slated roofs were accepted as an improvement or at least as the sign of change in the countryside.

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The roof improvement project in the Korean countryside was one of the most widely implemented and heavily emphasized programs within the New Village Movement. Depictions of thatched roofs, often accompanied with contrasting images of the tall and luxurious buildings of an urban skyline, had for decades been representative of rural poverty. Such clear-cut displays of difference represented the countryside as an underdeveloped unity in comparison with the city, its affluent spatial counterpart. This supposed division between the rural and the urban also erased the ever-present exchange of capital between the agricultural industry located mainly in the countryside and urban-based manufacturing. The economic disparity between the agricultural industry and manufacturing was the product of the unequal exchange that had existed throughout the post-war industrialization process. However, only images of the explicit material differences, the byproduct of this exchange, were publicly highlighted. This mode of depiction, that bracketed out the countryside from the city, suggested that the poverty of rural areas had been the fault of unproductive agriculture and farmers. Such spatial representations now demanded that the countryside and farmers acknowledge their culpability and undergo self-improvement to catch up with the thriving cities. The New Village Movement of the 1970s relied on such spatio-visual strategies to first target the iconized rural roof, forcing farmers to rapidly replace their thatched houses, the symbol of rural underdevelopment, with their own financing and labour.

By the mid-1970s, the visual spectacles of the rural roofing had brought about rapid change to the landscape of the countryside. The ‘change’ in the countryside particularly appeared through the loudly coloured slate roofs on the houses that lined the highways, main roads, rail
lines, and scenic spots. This techno-coloured display propagandized modernization, development, and ultimately the legitimacy of the military regime’s rule. According to the government’s official rhetoric on this change, absolute destitution had finally been overcome in rural areas.1

As a following step, the regime’s interest shifted to the more fundamental matter of rural housing itself, instead of the partial reconstruction of roofs. Old and shabby rural houses were being described as the “vestiges of poverty (Kanan ŭi hŭnjŏk).”2 In this representation, “cultural life in the rural areas, comparable to that in the cities,” could not be attainable until “uprooting the inferior houses thoroughly and constructing new cultural houses.”3 Tumble-down houses with a brand-new slate roof were likened to the unbalanced appearance radiated by a person dressed in a traditional Korean costume with a foreign hat (“Paji chŏgori e chungjŏlmo” or “Ch’ima chŏgori e yangmaja”)4 or riding a bicycle wearing the hat of a traditional gentleman (“Kat ssŭgo chajŏn’gŏ t’anin kyŏk”)5. It was in this context that, under the motto of “the nation’s great construction project (Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa, 民族의 大役事),” the Rural Housing Improvement Project started off in the late 1970s.6

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1 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’ae’k kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’ae’ksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 57-58)
2 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’ae’k kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’ae’ksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 63)
3 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’ae’k kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’ae’ksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 63)
4 “Paji chŏgori e chungjŏlmo ssŭn kyŏk” [Like wearing a traditional Korean costume with a foreign hat], Han’guk ilbo 3 February 1978; “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (144): Chugŏ pyŏnhŏyk (3), Ch’oga chibung aehwan” [New trend in the countryside (144): Housing revolution (3), Joys and sorrows of thatched roof], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 11 May 1978.
5 “Minjok ŭi p’ungsokhw - Ch’oga maăl i nama ita, Minsok maăl chijŏng umjijim, Sŏngju-gun Hwaan maăl” [Korean nation’s genre painting - thatched house village still remains; Move to assign Hwaan village in Sŏngju County for folk village], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 23 September 1978.
6 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’ae’k kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’ae’ksa [The Great Construction Project of
As foreshadowed in the similes and metaphors used to advocate for the housing project, the post-roofing construction plans also continued to make use of the spatio-visual strategies outlined above. The first section of this chapter will look into the more outspoken means and objectives of state strategies revealed in the housing project, especially by paying attention to the selection process in determining new housing locations and what was publicly expressed as a “display effect.” The government’s preliminary survey document on the status of rural houses in 1977 and the subsequent full-scale execution of construction works from 1978 showed clearly that, from the beginning, the housing project was designed to focus on what were defined as ‘visible’ places. The newly built farmhouses were not just homes for the farming residents, but at the same time were also showcase houses meant to display the completion of rural modernization to urban visitors, foreign tourists, and train, bus, and car passengers.

In the Cold War competition over the shared value of development, the new farmhouse was also mechanically expected to visualize the superiority of the South Korean capitalist regime. Sometimes such a spatial expression of the Cold War was openly and abruptly enunciated through the voice of the regime; in 1978, a high ranking executive of the New Village Movement explicated that the new farmhouses located near the DMZ (De-Militarized Zone) would effectively display developing South Korea to foreign visitors. In fact, the rollout of the rural housing project was often compared to the execution of a battle strategy. Local housing officials felt as if they were going into the battlefield when they were scheduled to meet angry farmers who rebuked the government’s repeated appeals to demolish the newly-roofed houses and

*the Nation: The History of Rural Housing*, Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 63); “Chut’ae kae ryaŋ saöp ‘sinparam’ kwa chabûm’i soo yongdori hyŏnjang” [Rural housing improvement sites, a vortex of excitements and troubles], *Chosŏn ilbo* 19 March 1978.
replace them with entirely new structures. Although the frontier of the Cold War was around the 38th parallel, the battleground could actually be seen in the construction sites of the countryside, and the confrontations that occurred there between the state and farmers over daily living space.

For the last couple of tumultuous years in the 1970s, a total of 185,782 houses were reconstructed in the name of the Saemaŭl Rural Housing Improvement. These new houses had influence over the subsequent design and construction of new rural houses throughout the 1980s. The houses under construction seemed to demonstrate the promising future of agricultural economy; and many farmers believed that their new houses would be left to their children and again grandchildren for generations. However, today about three decades after the housing boom, the rural landscape of South Korea tells us a different ending. As of 2010, more than 230,000 rural houses, which exceeds the total number of the newly-built houses in the 1970s, sit empty. This was the result of a continuous and steep decrease in the population of farm households, a trend that was unfolding even during the peak of the Saemaŭl roofing and house-building projects of the 1970s. The percentage of farm household population was close to 50% of the national total in the late 1960s, but it continued to drop to 28.4% (10.83 million) in 1980.

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8 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (154): Chugŏ pyŏnhŏyk (13), Saem sotnŭn ŭi'yŏk” [New trend in the countryside (154): Housing revolution (13), Morale goes up], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 3 June 1978.
15.5% (6.66 million) in 1990, 8.6% (4.03 million) in 2000, and 6.3% (3.06 million) in 2010.\textsuperscript{11} According to the 2010 census, the number of farm households was 1.18 million, which was only 6.5% of the total households in South Korea.\textsuperscript{12} The exodus of rural youth has been more serious: 31.8% of the farm household population in 2010 was aged 65 or older,\textsuperscript{13} whereas the rate was only 9.2% in the cities.\textsuperscript{14}

The abandoned rural houses formerly used to visualize colourful prosperity and political legitimacy back in the 1970s, evoke a sense of fear now. In 2007, a resident living in Inch’ŏn was shocked to discover his parents’ home in Kanghwa County introduced in a television show he was watching as a notorious haunted house (Hyungga).\textsuperscript{15} The house was actually the place where he spent his childhood and was associated with countless memories.


\textsuperscript{15} “TV e naon ‘kongp’o ŭi hyungga’… algo poni nae chip?” [‘A haunted house of fear’ appeared on a television show… it turns out to be my house?], *Kyŏnghyang sinmun* 17 November 2012.
Following his parents’ death, the man moved to the city without selling it. The uninhabited residence soon fell into disrepair, and dreadful rumours came to be associated with the ruined house (*P’yega*): “The family who had lived in the house committed suicide,” “A girl in convalescence was murdered in the house,” “A child ghost stays around the sofa,” and “Sounds of a woman’s sobbing cry come from the house.” Commercial media indiscreetly reported on the many rumours, while making use of camera angles reminiscent of a fake-documentary horror film, stimulating the viewers’ sense of fear. This anecdote speaks to the way that ruined rural houses continue to be revitalized and consumed again after the completion of their old task of ‘standing for development.’

Well aware of the history of the empty house, village neighbours were troubled by the absurd rumours and prying eyes of outsiders. However, even for those who remained in the countryside, ruined houses that their neighbours had left behind can also at times be a cause for fear. The unoccupied houses were likely to draw trespassing strangers, who often interrupted the villagers’ daily life.16 The elderly inhabitants worried much about squatters, fire, crime, and the like that might be drawn to the ruined houses.17 In the situation that about two out of ten rural houses are vacant and damaged as of 2010,18 the residents sometimes felt “lacklustre” from the

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16 “TV e naon ‘kongp’o ūi hyungga’… algo poni nae chip?” [‘A haunted house of fear’ appeared on a television show… it turns out to be my house?], *Kvônghyang sinman* 17 November 2012; “Nǚlóman kanǹ nongch’on p’yega” [Increasingly ruined rural houses], *Sin’a ilbo* 14 June 2008.

17 “Nǚlóman kanǹ nongch’on p’yega” [Increasingly ruined rural houses], *Sin’a ilbo* 14 June 2008.

bleak landscape of their village.\textsuperscript{19} Through more desperate rhetoric, those communities with many ruined houses have been described as “dead villages.”\textsuperscript{20}

In a sense, such images of rural ruins as bleak, precarious, and lifeless spaces can be associated with the fundamental conditions of an ailing agricultural economy in South Korea especially under the global market system regulated by WTO (World Trade Organization) and FTA (Free Trade Agreement). According to this reading, the fears of the ruined house actually can be viewed as a capitalist sensitivity to economic decline and depression. Yet, it would be too early to conclude that the sense of fear is unique to the phase of recession or stagnation; living space captured by capital has indeed always been a source of fear from the beginning. The second section of this chapter will trace the process of how the capitalist fear surged through farmers’ new houses back in the 1970s, which then stood to display the splendid ‘development’ of the period.

Compared to roofing, constructing a new house was much more financially burdensome to the farmers. Looking at their completed houses, the farmers developed a feeling of uneasiness or fear that the Agricultural Cooperatives might take everything someday in the future when they would fail to repay their housing loans. Planning the rural housing project, the government prepared a housing fund program, which would loan 80\% of total construction cost to farmers and be repaid over 20 years. However, the 20\% share of the costs still imposed a heavy burden on farmers. Moreover, the government underestimated the standard construction

\textsuperscript{19} “Nongch’on mau p’yega idaero tul su ᄆpta” [We cannot leave the issue of ruined houses in the rural villages unsettled], Kangjin ilbo 17 February 2015; “TV e naon ‘kongp’o úi hyungga’… algo poni nae chip?” [‘A haunted house of fear’ appeared on a television show… it turns out to be my house?], Kyŏngyang sinmun 17 November 2012; “Nŭloman kanăn nongch’on p’yega” [Increasingly ruined rural houses], Sin’a ilbo 14 June 2008.

costs, and set loan amount quota on the basis of a lowered cost appraisement. The government expected farmers to compensate for the shortage of funds by providing construction labour at the sites and by independently producing building materials. To this end, the government distributed various construction manuals and standardized blue prints throughout the countryside. Yet, this scheme could not serve as a fundamental solution to the farmers’ deteriorating financial situation; there was a great rise in the wage of construction workers and the price of construction materials, because the construction of houses started off all over the countryside and all at once. The high cost of building sites also raised farmers’ anxiety. Farmers in need of funds had to take out additional high-interest loans from commercial banks, private moneylenders, or even from distant relatives living in the city.

By constructing a new house, farmers became even more subordinated to financial capital, especially to the state-mediating fiscal capital. Under various repayment programs prepared by the state and financial institutions, farmers now had to be engaged in agricultural (or non-agricultural) production in order to keep paying back their debts. Their present and future labour would be also re-calculated in the form of principle and interest. In this way, financial capital infiltrated into a farmer’s daily space and production process. This infiltration was no less threatening than the visible trespassers into the derelict farm houses of today.

Behind the farmers’ fear of debt, the state propagated the accomplishment of rural modernization, and financial capital became interwoven in farmers’ production activities in more sophisticated ways. However, the ultimate function of the new house was indeed in the market, where growing manufacturers sought the countryside to perform the role of a loyal domestic market in order to resolve the renewed accumulation crisis in the 1970s. To look into this aspect in depth, the third section of this chapter will track the flows of farmers’ debt capital for their
new house, especially focusing on the relationship between the growth of cement capital and the rural housing boom in the 1970s.

Since the late 1960s, cement industries in South Korea had been in a recession caused by excessive competition and overproduction. Under these circumstances, the manufacturers requested the developmentalist regime to take measures to resolve the slump in the market. Responding to this demand, the government began to buy up surplus cement, and disperse it widely throughout the countryside. Many official documents describe this moment as the origin of the New Village Movement. Through the subsequent Saemaŭl projects such as roofing and rural housing, domestic cement market rapidly expanded especially in the countryside. Today cement-based Chaebŏls openly concede that the industry was able to get over the crisis of accumulation thanks to the Saemaŭl housing boom and the expansion of a new domestic market in the rural areas. In the expanded market, however, the cement manufacturers continued to form a cartel to control costs and distribution, leading to skyrocketing cement prices and an increased financial burden on farmers. The farmers’ new houses were a space where an unequal exchange relationship was being concealed under a façade of rural modernization; at the same time and more importantly, such an unequal exchange relationship was even more strengthened in the mediation of the state and financial capital.
Display Effect

In September 1977, the Ministry of Home Affairs surveyed the status of rural houses as a part of a preliminary process for the rural housing improvement project. The survey report contained statistical information about the targeted houses to be improved, categorizing them by location into groupings such as houses near “highways, railroads, historical and sightseeing places, national roads, local roads, and others.” This way of producing information implied that, from the beginning, the project privileged aesthetics over how to improve comparatively worse conditioned houses. According to the report, 64% of targeted houses were located in ‘visible’ locations. The remaining 36% were to be found in so-called invisible “others.” During the actual construction years in 1978 and 1979, 91.6% of the government-supported improvement was conducted in the very ‘visible’ places. As a guiding principle for the selection of rural houses to be rebuilt, the government put priority on firstly “sub-standard houses located within the visibility range of nearby roads” and secondly “houses closer to roads.”

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21 Naemubu chibang haengjöngguk nongch’on chut’ae k’aeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs], 1979. Minjok üi tae yöksa: Nongch’on chut’ae k’aeks [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing], Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 145)
22 Naemubu chibang haengjöngguk nongch’on chut’ae k’aeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs], 1979. Minjok üi tae yöksa: Nongch’on chut’ae k’aeks [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing], Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 146-147); Naemubu [Ministry of Home Affairs], 1980. Saemaül Undong 10-yönsa (Charyo P’yön) [A 10 Year History of the New Village Movement: Data], Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 43)
24 Naemubu chibang haengjöngguk nongch’on chut’ae k’aeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs], 1979. Minjok üi tae yöksa: Nongch’on chut’ae k’aeks [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing], Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 164)
During the late 1970s, the construction of rural houses was flourishing like “measles”\(^{25}\) or a “fever”\(^{26}\) on a national scale, but mostly only along highways and railroads where the eyes of countless visitors passed by.\(^{27}\) In 1978, the *Chosön ilbo* described this “craze for building new houses (*Saejip chitki param*)”: “Along the Kyŏngbu Highway from the Seoul tollgate to Pusan, most of the highway villages are raising new houses, pulling down old ones, and piling up cement, bricks, timber, and sand for house-building under a standing signboard of ‘Village Improvement Sites, a Vortex of Excitements and Troubles’” [Naemubu Ministry of Home Affairs. 1980. *Saemaid Undong 10-yŏnsa (Charyo P’yŏn) [A 10 Year History of the New Village Movement: Data]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 43)]

\(^{25}\) “Chut’aek kaeryang saop ‘sinparam’ kwa chabum ūi soyongdori hyŏnjang” [Rural housing improvement sites, a vortex of excitements and troubles]. *Chosön ilbo* 19 March 1978.


Structural Improvement (Ch’wirak kujo kaesŏn).’ This phenomenon is observed everywhere around the Namhae Highway, the Honam Highway, and major sightseeing locations.”28 This panoramic sketch of nationwide house-building was the informative image captured by the eyes of the reporter, but at the same time it was also the very landscape that passengers would observe when traveling along the way.

The new houses under construction were not only dwellings for farming residents, but also structures to display to tourists and foreigners. Sometimes, the strategic role of the rural house as a model house for visitors was bluntly revealed by the government’s top authority on the housing improvement project. On March 22 in 1978, the Minister of Home Affairs, Kim Ch’i-yŏl, had a meeting for daily newspaper reporters.29 A journalist working for the Tongyang News Agency posed a straightforward question, “Why does the Housing Improvement Project start first around highways, railroads, or sightseeing places? Isn’t this going for the exhibition effect (Chŏnsi hyokkwa)?” Minister Kim answered, “Yes, it aims for the exhibition effect. The housing improvement will draw wide attention only at heavily travelled places, thereby encouraging the construction works among people. Also, visible places from the 38th Parallel are being considered. Last year, over a million foreigners visited Korea to make an observation tour to our rural villages. It is expected that we have 1.3 million visitors for this year. Even though we can’t fabricate and propagate illusions like Kim Il-sung, I believe it is necessary at least to let our visitors know that rural [South] Korea is changing like this. That is the reason why areas near highways, railroads, and sightseeing places were selected in the first year of the project.”

28 “Chut’aek kaeryang saop ‘sinparam’ kwa chabŭm ŭi soyongdori hyŏnjang” [Rural housing improvement sites, a vortex of excitements and troubles], Chosŏn ilbo 19 March 1978.
Kim’s mind, the rural house under construction was not simply a habitat for farmers, it was also part of the Cold War fairground, meant to display the superiority and development of South Korea. In this way, the new house was not confined to the countryside, but extended from the DMZ (De-Militarized Zone) on the Korean peninsula to the world along the domestic highways. Also, to be open to view from the highways, the new houses were often designed to face highways directly contravening the traditional preference for a south-facing orientation meant to catch the sunlight for a longer time.\textsuperscript{30} Newspapers called this directional preference to highways cynically as “highway-facing aspect (Kosok toro hyang).”\textsuperscript{31}

The excessive emphasis on visual display excluded houses in practical need of support from the housing improvement project, only because they were not visible enough.\textsuperscript{32} On the other side, the house owners of selected districts were importunately pressured to follow the government’s reconstruction plans regardless of what they thought.\textsuperscript{33} Local housing officials worked at the forefront of the face-to-face pressure, making tenacious and desperate efforts to accomplish the government’s project all over the countryside. Kim Wŏn-gil, a housing official in the Yŏch’on County Office, stated in 1978, “I leave home at dawn and come back from the office at night, seeing stars in the sky.”\textsuperscript{34} Cho Yŏng-bŏm, another housing official in the Asan County Office missed time with his family, saying, “It’s been almost three months since I last sat

\textsuperscript{31} “Nongch’on pom ŭn wannûnde… (chung): Saenghwal kwa ŭistik” [Even if spring comes to rural village… (2): Livelihood and consciousness], \textit{Tonga ilbo} 12 April 1980.
\textsuperscript{32} “Kŏttonŭn nongch’on chut’ae kㄜaeryang” [Unfocused rural housing improvement], \textit{Han’guk ilbo} 19 March 1978.
\textsuperscript{33} “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut’ae kㄜaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], \textit{Tonga ilbo} 13 March 1978.
\textsuperscript{34} “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (169): Chugŭ pyŏnhyŏk (28), Chut’ae kongmuwŏn” [New trend in the countryside (169): Housing revolution (28), Housing officials], \textit{Kyŏnghyang sinmun} 25 July 1978.
together with my son and talked with him.35 One news article likened the officials’ activities to conducting a war, explaining that 918 housing officials (Chut’aek kongmuwôn) all over the nation moved in perfect order from the control tower of the Housing Improvement Department at the Ministry of Home Affairs to the smallest units of local town (Ŭp) and township (Myŏn) offices.36 The housing officials consisted of administrative staff for the New Village Movement and newly appointed technical experts who specialized in construction or civil engineering. Two to three housing officials worked for each Ŭp or Myŏn office. The officials in the smallest local units reported detailed housing projects in terms of progress, financing, and construction materials in the villages within their jurisdiction. Then, the central office of Housing Improvement Department issued new orders after analysing the collected information.37

Sometimes, this top-down and coercive process came into conflict with farmers’ straightforward complaints and objections. Sin Sang-t’ae, a rural resident in Koksŏng County, considered the government’s plan for his own house as a nonsensical imposition that was hard to accept.38 In 1978, he complained, “I renovated the walls at the cost of 50,000 wŏn in 1972, and replaced the thatched roof with slates at 150,000 wŏn in 1973. How can they now tell me to pull down my house completely and build again? I can’t understand it.” Most farmers residing in the selected houses in P’yŏngch’ang County also opposed the government’s decision, saying, “Does a house in good shape give me food?” or “Does it make sense to demolish my house when I’ve

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38 “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut’aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], Tonga ilbo 13 March 1978.
already taken off thatch and covered it with galvanized iron sheets?\footnote{39 “Sae nongch’on ū chôn’gae: Kangwŏn P’yŏngch’ang-gun Pongp’yŏng-myŏn samgŏri changt’ŏ” [Inauguration of new rural village: At the Samgŏri market site in Pongp’yŏng Township, P’yŏngch’ang County, Kangwŏn Province], Sŏul sinmun 3 May 1978.} Some residents of Kimhae County demonstrated their frustration through actions in 1978.\footnote{40 “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut’aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], Tonga ilbo 13 March 1978.} The county office made a decision to rebuild 729 houses mainly near the highway and planted red flags on the sites saying “Build My House Myself (Nae chip ūn nae ga chinnŭnda)” on its own authority. Most of the residents were offended by the arbitrary decision and resented the red flags in their land. In response, they simply uprooted the flags.

However, the residents of the selected rural houses generally had to consent to the government’s reconstruction plan in the end. According to a news report,\footnote{41 “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut’aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], Tonga ilbo 13 March 1978.} about 30% of the targeted dwellings in Kyŏnggi Province were destitute farmhouses whose owners at first strongly disagreed with the government’s decision of rebuilding their houses in the name of the Rural Housing Improvement. Yet, in the end, most of them yielded to the local officials’ persistent and irritating pressure. The farmers in Kyŏnggi Province were not alone in this annoying experience.

The projected number of houses to be improved through the government’s plan totalled 543,511 units, 18.6% out of a total of 2,925,000 farm houses in South Korea during the 1970s.\footnote{42 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ū taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 146-147)} By 1979, the completed houses had reached 185,782 units\footnote{43 Naemubu [Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1980. Saemaŭl Undong 10-yŏnsa (Charyo P’yŏn) [A 10 Year History of the New Village Movement: Data]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 44)}; in other words, the actual construction of rural houses for the last four years of the 1970s (including the experimental constructions in 1976 and 1977) was 34.18% of the planned houses; it was 6.35% of the total
number of farm houses in the country. When compared to the total number of rural farm houses, the reconstructed 185,782 units (6.35%) may not seem to be an enormous figure. However, as many architectural studies have pointed out, the newly built houses in the 1970s had an important influence on the subsequent construction and forms of rural housing design employed in South Korea.\textsuperscript{44} The houses under construction were a kind of model house of modernization and prosperity, which boasted what ‘even rural South Korea’ had achieved and at the same time suggested the type of desirable culture to be constructed in the countryside. Standing along the highways, railroads, major national roads, and popular sightseeing locations, the new farm houses also served as a type of billboard that advertised the ‘disappearing’ gap between the city and the countryside. The transforming landscape visualized by the new houses in the countryside was even more impressive and overwhelming than the changes that came with the slate roofs before.

**Fear of Debt**

In 1980, a news report described the pandemic of indebtedness among farmers, saying, “They [farmers] fear debt. Every farmer has a debt of 500,000 wŏn on average from the Agricultural Cooperatives. Some people are concerned that the Cooperatives may take all the farmers’

properties in the end.”

One of the major causes of the debt fear was the New Village Movement of the 1970s. In particular, the rural housing improvement project led to South Korean farmers’ subordination to financial capital on such a large scale as to arouse among millions a form of fundamental ‘capitalist fear’ of losing all of one’s own private property.

Prior to the full-scale execution of the rural housing project, the government prepared a financial loan program called the “Rural Housing Instalment (Nongch’on chut’aek pugŭm)” to support the farmers who had to construct their houses under the project. This financial loan was intended to cover 80% of the total construction expenses, with farmers paying the remaining 20%. The amortization period was 20 years. Farmers repaid only interest for the first five years, and paid off principle and interest together for the remaining fifteen years. The annual interest rate was 11%, which was even lower than 16.5% low interest rate for urban workers’ housing loan at the time. The finance for the Rural Housing Instalment came from the central government (20%), local governments (20%), the Korea Housing Bank (25%), and the Agricultural Cooperatives Federation (35%). The low interest rate was possible through the central government and local governments’ financing of no interest.

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45 “Nongch’on pom ŭn wannünde… (chung): Saenghwal kwa ŭisik” [Even if spring comes to rural village… (2): Livelihood and consciousness], Tonga ilbo 12 April 1980.

46 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs], 1979. Minjok ŭi taeôksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 240-245)
CHAPTER 3

<Picture 3.2> Rural Villages Under Construction

Image from Naemubu chibang haengiŏngguk nongch’ on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok u i taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeks [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 381 and p. 615)
The general condition of the government’s loan support looked advantageous to the farmers, at least on the surface. Yet, to pay immediately the 20% of the whole construction cost was considerably burdensome to the farmers. According to the government’s standard cost estimation, the smallest house of 15 $p'yŏng$ (49.6 $㎡$) required the total construction budget of 1.7 million wŏn; in other words, farmers had to finance 340,000 wŏn at once.\(^{47}\) Considering that 75% of the selected farm households for the housing improvement project had an annual income under a million wŏn,\(^{48}\) the 340,000 wŏn in ready money was not a small sum. Of course, the financial burden was much heavier when the farmers built larger houses. For a house of 25 $p'yŏng$ (82.6 $㎡$), farmers had to pay 560,000 wŏn upfront from their own pocket, in addition to the long-term loan of 2.24 million wŏn.\(^{49}\) It was evident that building a house could not be compared to roofing in terms of farmers’ financial hardship, regardless of the possible loan amount.\(^{50}\)

A more serious problem came from the government’s underestimation of standard construction costs. The government expected that farmers could cut down the cost by providing

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\(^{47}\) Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch'on chut'aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. *Minjok ūi taeyŏksa: Nongch'on chut'aeksa* [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 244); “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut'aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], *Tonga ilbo* 13 March 1978.


\(^{49}\) Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch'on chut'aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. *Minjok ūi taeyŏksa: Nongch'on chut'aeksa* [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 244); “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut'aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], *Tonga ilbo* 13 March 1978.

\(^{50}\) “Sasŏl: Muri ōmnŭn nongch'on chut'aek kaeryang” [Editorial: Affordable construction of rural house], *Kyŏnghyang sinmun* 11 June 1977.
their own labour and producing some of the needed construction materials themselves.\textsuperscript{51} Widespread standardized blueprints and materials made it possible for ordinary farmers to become semi-skilled construction workers. The manuals published for the rural housing improvement program explained that farmers could work on the construction process by laying foundations, bricks and iron rod, plastering, roofing, and other miscellaneous work. All told this supplementary labour was projected to substitute for 126 man-days in constructing a house of 20 $p'yŏng$ ($66.1 \text{ m}^2$).\textsuperscript{52} In this way, the standard construction cost for rural housing stayed at the level of only 76\% of the official house-building cost then set by the Ministry of Construction.\textsuperscript{53} The discrepancy between actual construction expenses and the government’s estimation-based loan increased the onus on farmers’ own financing and labour, on top of the 20\% of upfront payment.


\textsuperscript{52} Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok üi tae’yŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 255-256)

\textsuperscript{53} Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok üi tae’yŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 245 and p. 253)
<Picture 3.3> Manual for Block Making Procedure

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjôngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok iii taeyôksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 458-459)

<Picture 3.4> Block Making by Farmers

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjôngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok iii taeyôksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 179)
<Picture 3.5> Labour Mobilization in the Rural Villages

<Picture 3.6> Standardized Blueprint for 15 P’yŏng (49.6 m$^2$) A-Type House

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjongguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ii taeyôksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 1399)
Moreover, shortages of materials and workers increased the cost of construction expenses in the late 1970s, augmenting the actual portion of farmers’ own immediate cost. As more than 50,000 farm households started rebuilding dwellings at the same time all over the countryside from the spring in 1978, construction sites were short of building materials and
workers.\textsuperscript{54} According to a feature report on the shortage of construction workers,\textsuperscript{55} rural villagers competed with each other to “scout out” skilled labour. Eventually in the case of Myŏngju County, the residents of its thirteen towns (Ŭp) and townships (Myŏn) had to make a “gentlemen’s agreement (Sinsa hyŏpjŏng)” that promised not to lure carpenters, bricklayers, and plasterers away from neighboring villages. The daily wage for a carpenter was generally about 4,000 wŏn at the time, but it was hard for the residents of Kangwŏn Province to employ carpenters even with a payment of 7,000 wŏn a day. It was said that housing owners had to treat construction workers very courteously, serving two good meals, alcohol, and cigarettes every day in order to ask them to work. Yi Kwi-rye in Yŏch’on County complained, “Looking for a carpenter is like plucking a star from the sky.” On the other side, Chŏng Il-hun, a carpenter in the same county, was growing as a successful businessman in the local construction industry. Until 1976, it was actually very hard for Mr. Chŏng even to support his six family members with his daily wage. Yet, he made a profit of 400,000 to 500,000 wŏn per a house of 18 p’yŏng (59.5 ㎡) as of 1978. He was constructing five to six houses per village in the late 1970s. In a situation where the price of cement and wages doubled, housing owners had to halt their construction at many sites.\textsuperscript{56} They sold off cattle or took out a private loan to continue the construction.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{54} “Nongch’on chut’aek kaeryang saŏp e 3-nan: T’aekchi, illyŏk, chajae” [Three difficulties in Rural Housing Improvement Project: building lots, workers, and materials], Han’guk ilbo 15 February 1978; “3-nan kyŏknŭn nongch’on chut’aek kaeryang saŏp” [Rural Housing Improvement Project suffers from three difficulties], Chungang ilbo 22 May 1978; “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (165): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (24), T’osu wa moksu” [New trend in the countryside (165): Housing revolution (24), Plasterers and carpenters], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 13 July 1978; Naemubu chibang haenggiŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ii taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 286)

\textsuperscript{55} “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (165): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (24), T’osu wa moksu” [New trend in the countryside (165): Housing revolution (24), Plasterers and carpenters], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 13 July 1978.

\textsuperscript{56} “3-nan kyŏknŭn nongch’on chut’aek kaeryang saŏp” [Rural Housing Improvement Project suffers from three difficulties], Chungang ilbo 22 May 1978.

\textsuperscript{57} “3-nan kyŏknŭn nongch’on chut’aek kaeryang saŏp” [Rural Housing Improvement Project suffers from three difficulties], Chungang ilbo 22 May 1978.
Newspapers recalculate that the farmers’ immediate expenses would increase two to five times or more than that of the government’s “unrealistic” estimation.58

The shortage of building sites also added to the hardship of farmers. Residents of rural areas usually needed to secure more land or a new lot for housing, especially in a district where many houses had to be reconstructed at a time. The sharp increase in construction cost often happened in areas where land for new houses was in short supply. Farmers in Taedŏk County confronted a serious lack of land zoned for housing. Already 70% of its gross area had been designated as limited development district, yet many houses had to be reconstructed because of the county’s proximity to national roads, Kyŏngbu highway, and railroads.59 Kim Chong-su, one of the county residents, expressed his frustration about the issue of land: “After I had received the instruction about housing improvement, I applied for the Rural Housing Instalment to build a house of 18 p’yŏng (59.5㎡) for which I could borrow 1.6 million wŏn. But it looks like now I have to buy housing lot of 150 p’yŏng (495.9㎡) at the price of 50,000 wŏn per p’yŏng (3.3㎡). Even though I have no means to raise 7.5 million wŏn for it, I’m currently pressed to complete the construction by the end of May.”60 The villagers of Taedŏk County were not alone in their frustration. As expected, such concerns about expensive land for housing were even deeper

58 “Kŏtŏnŭn nongch’on chut’aek kaeryang” [Unfocused rural housing improvement], Han’guk ilbo 19 March 1978; “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut’aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], Tonga ilbo 13 March 1978; “Nongch’on chut’aek kaeryang saŏp e 3-nan: T’aekchi, illyŏk, chajae” [Three difficulties in Rural Housing Improvement Project: building lots, workers, and materials], Han’guk ilbo 15 February 1978; “3-nan kyŏkmun nongch’on chut’aek kaeryang saŏp” [Rural Housing Improvement Project suffers from three difficulties], Chungang ilbo 22 May 1978.
59 “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut’aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], Tonga ilbo 13 March 1978.
60 “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut’aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], Tonga ilbo 13 March 1978.
particularly among suburban farmers who had to purchase more land around large cities at the time.61

Many housing owners did not think that they could afford the upfront expenses and repay the large loans. Some abandoned construction work right before or in the middle of building houses, although they had already agreed to follow the government’s housing project, sometimes by importunate persuasions and other times out of their own desire.62 For those who kept building his or her house, debt was often an unavoidable way to deal with financial needs. According to a reported case of South Ch’ungch’ŏng Province, 7,594 houses were built in 1977 and 20% of the housing owners had to borrow funds from private money markets to cover expenses.63 It was also very common for the farmers to ask their relatives to lend money for construction costs. Yet, to ask such a money-related favour of relatives could not be a pleasant experience at all. Pak Sun-yŏng, who was building a house in Myŏngju County, stated that “I’ve followed an old proverb, ‘Lend your money and lose your friend.’ For this time, however, I had no choice but to borrow 300,000 wŏn from my relative living in a city.”64 As of May in 1978, 30% of housing owners at Naesŏ Myŏn in Ch’angwŏn County had private debts of at least 300,000 wŏn to a million wŏn.65 One of the county residents, Kim Chang-su, borrowed 400,000

61 “Kitpal man yoranhan nongchon chut’aek kaeryang” [Rural housing improvement under the disguise of bombastic and gaudy banners], Tonga ilbo 13 March 1978.
wŏn from his cousin who worked for a factory in Taegu. Kim T’aek-yong in nearby Ch’angnyŏng County also regretted that he had to spend 150,000 wŏn saved for his daughter’s marriage in addition to borrowing 500,000 wŏn from his niece-in-law living in Pusan. In this way, the rural improvement project was driving many farmers to ‘lose face’ in front of their family members and even distant relatives.

A more severe condition was that, in addition to the steeply raised expenses, housing owners still had to pay a large amount of the Rural Housing Instalment over the ensuing 20 years. Kim T’ae-hwan in Kŭmŭng County built a house of 18 p’yŏng in 1979. The new house cost him 4 million wŏn in total. On top of 2.4 million wŏn that he spent from his pocket, he also took out a loan of 1.6 million wŏn through the Rural Housing Instalment, which was 80% of the government’s standard estimation for the cost of a 18 p’yŏng (59.5 ｍ²) house. Looking at his new house, Mr. Kim sighed, “It is of course comfortable to live in. But I’m worried about how to repay the debts.”

A New Cement Market

Aside from the cost of labour and land, the financing from farmers’ debt, a source of ‘fear’ and ‘disgrace,’ flowed mostly into the construction materials industry. The extracted borrowed capital from farmers was injected particularly into cement manufacturing. With the considerable

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68 “Nongch’on pom ūn wannūnde… (chung): Saenghwal kwa ŭisik” [Even if spring comes to rural village… (2): Livelihood and consciousness], Tonga ilbo 12 April 1980.
and stable profits from the new domestic market found in the countryside, the cement manufacturers recovered from their industry-wide crisis and kept expanding production facilities until the end of the 1970s, setting the foundations for export-oriented construction industries in South Korea.69

Building one farm house required about 60 different kinds of construction materials. To list only a few representative goods, 620,000 tons of cement (or 15,500,000 sacks of cement), 70 million pieces of roof tile, and 4 million litres of paint were used to build the 50,000 government ‘supported’ farm houses in 1978.70 From 1976 to 1979, 185,782 farm houses in total were completed in the name of the Rural Housing Improvement.71 To simply apply the government data shown above, the Rural Housing Improvement Project required housing owners to consume more than 2.3 million tons of cement, 260 million pieces of roof tile, and 14.8 million litres of paint during the late 1970s. Farmers’ consumption of these products provided a stable rural market for the industries.

Construction-related manufacturing, especially the domestic cement industry, experienced a severe recession from overproduction and competition during the late 1960s, with its peak in 1970 and 1971.72 Companies like Tongyang and Taehan had expanded their facilities

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70 Naemubu chihang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok uii taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeks[a The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 269)
since the 1950s, and new manufacturers such as Ssangryong, Han’il, Hyŏndae, Sŏngsin, and Asea companies participated in and competed for the market share in the 1960s.73 As a result, the annual production capacity of domestic cement manufacturing rapidly increased from approximately 0.7 million tons in 1962 to almost 7 million tons in 1970.74 However, domestic demand for cement did not keep up with production due to an economic slump and the government’s adoption of a tight financing policy.75 For two to three consecutive years in the late 1960s, the domestic consumption of cement grew about 30 to 40 percent annually. Yet, the cement consumption decreased by 25% in 1970, and again by 15% in 1971.76 The saturated domestic market could not sustain expanded cement manufacturing. To make matters worse, the rise in the won-dollar exchange rate in 1971 escalated the cement companies’ financial burden.77

Most of the cement companies constructed and enlarged the production facilities through foreign


loans. The rise in exchange rates, thus, meant increases in the burden of repayment. It also increased the cost of imported raw materials such as bunker C oil, paper bags, and plaster, which were used for making finished cement products. Manufacturers entered into a phase of cutthroat competition for a limited market, which eventually degraded into a dumping war.78 Cement was traded below the cost of production.79 In 1971, Taehan Cement Company was taken over by other businesses, and Tongyang Cement Company went into receivership.80

At this juncture, the cement manufacturers made an urgent request for government assistance. The government intervened in the market with its financial power. The memoir of Kim Chŏng-ryŏm, who worked as the Chief Presidential Secretary from 1969 to 1978, provides an anecdotal clue to help understand the government’s function in the process.81 On a summer’s day in 1970, Kim Sŏng-gon, the owner of Ssangryong Cement Company and financial chairman of the ruling government party, visited Park Chung Hee to complain about the difficulties that the cement industry confronted. On the following day, Park and his cabinet members made a decision to allocate a budget of 3 billion wŏn for cement. The cement was soon sent to rural villages all over the countryside in the name of the New Village Movement.

80 Tongyang siment’u chusikhoesa [Tongyang Cement Corporation]. 1987. Tongyang kárup samsimnyŏnsa [A Thirty Year History of Tongyang Group]. Seoul: Tongyang siment’u chusikhoesa. (p. 150)
In the memories of government authorities and documents, the New Village Movement started with the practice of presenting the cement sacks to farmers free of charge.82 In 1973, the Ministry of Culture and Public Information published a book entitled *Saemaül Undong (The New Village Movement).*83 In a chapter entitled “How Did the New Village Movement Start?” the book explained, “following the President Park Chung Hee’s suggestion, the New Village Beautification Movement (*Saemaül Kakkugi Undong*) was conducted in 33,267 villages throughout the nation for eight months between November 1970 and May 1971. The government provided 335 sacks of cement equally for each village in order to support the test project during the agricultural off-season, and called for the spirit of self-help (*Chajo*), self-reliance (*Charip*), and cooperation (*Hyŏptong*) among the residents.”84 According to an agricultural economist Park Jin-hwan who worked as the President’s economic advisor throughout the 1970s, the government supplied each village with about 84 tons of free cement for public construction works from 1971 to 1978.85 With the government’s free cement, used to initiate the New Village Movement, the countryside became a stable domestic market for the cement industry throughout the 1970s. On top of the distributed free cement, farmers had to buy additional cement to renovate their roofs and further build their own houses. Farmers could not stop consuming cement and other

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85 Park Jin Hwan. 2005. *Park Chung Hee taet’ongnyŏng uii Han’guk kyŏngje kŏndaehwa wa Saemaül Undong [Modernization of the Korea’s Traditional Economy and the New Village Movement under the Leadership of Late President Park Chung Hee]*. Seoul: Park Chung Hee taet’ongnyŏng kinyŏm saŏphoe. (p. 108)
construction materials because of the government’s continuous initiation of projects of rural construction conducted in the name of the New Village Movement. The Rural Housing Improvement Project was located at the central position of these initiatives in the late 1970s.

The rural consumption of construction materials during the 1970s played a central role for Korean cement manufacturing to get out of recession and return to the path of growth that would in time allow for the sector to develop into a successful export industry. In its internal history entitled *A Thirty Year History of Ssangryong Cement* (1992), a company historian commented that, “the improvement of rural villages following the New Village Movement brought about increased demand for cement, and our business circle met a great boom.”

Similarly, *A Thirty Year History of Tongyang Group* (1987) also did not forget to mention the contribution of the New Village Movement towards the success of their cement business. Eventually, several cement manufacturers grew into large Chaebol conglomerates. Their expanded business, originating from cement manufacturing, were successful enough to commemorate their ‘adventurous’ experience of hardship and ultimate success through the production of historical texts. The success of the cement manufacturers was mainly due to the military regime’s developmentalist economic plans, which triggered the construction boom throughout the 1970s in every sphere of public infrastructures, housing, and production facilities. Yet, as the history books of the Chaebol groups emphasized, it was also evident that


cement manufacturing was indebted to the farmers as a consistent body of consumers who together composed a solid domestic market.

The exchange between cement manufacturers and farmers, however, was not fair even according the principles of the free market. Facing a crisis in their business, the six cement manufacturers of *Ssangryong*, *Tongyang*, *Taehan*, *Han’il*, *Hyŏndae*, and *Asea* formed a cartel called the Korean Cement Joint Sale Corporation (*Han’guk Yanghoe Kongp’an Chusik Hoesa*) in 1971, which changed into *Sŏhan Business Corporation* (*Sŏhan Sil’ŏp Chusik Hoesa*) in 1976.89 The nominal purpose of the cement cartel was to prevent dumping or overheated competition and to seek for cooperative ways of effective transportation and expansion of exports.90 However, the essential role of the cartel was not to allow price competition by unifying distributors and managing joint-sale agencies together. The government was very sympathetic to the cement manufacturers’ interest and readily approved the establishment of the cartel. The state’s cooperation even allowed for the extension of the *Sŏhan Business Corporation* throughout the 1970s when the recession of cement business had already subsided.91 Under the mutual assistance system between the government and cement capital, the large manufacturers had the exclusive control over price and distribution in the market.92 This brought about the serious

89 *Ssangyong yanghoe kongŏp chusikhoesa [Ssangyong Cement Industrial Company]*. 1992. *Ssangyong yanghoe samsimnyŏnsa [A Thirty Year History of Ssangyong Cement Industrial Company]*. Seoul: Ssangyong yanghoe kongŏp chusikhoesa. (pp. 149-151 and pp. 239-251)
91 “Silsuŏpye chujang, ‘Siment’ŭ k’arŭt’el chŭkkak haech’e twaeya mattang’” [‘Cement cartel must be broken up,’ asserts actual user industries], *Maeil kyŏngje* 31 October 1977; Ssangyong yanghoe kongŏp chusikhoesa [Ssangyong Cement Industrial Company]. 1992. *Ssangyong yanghoe samsimnyŏnsa [A Thirty Year History of Ssangyong Cement Industrial Company]*. Seoul: Ssangyong yanghoe kongŏp chusikhoesa. (pp. 242-244)
shortage of cement and the sharp increase of end-user price, which came to be called the
“Cement Shock (Siment’ū p’adong).”93

In 1977, the official price for a 40 kg sack of cement was 768 wŏn, but, for a time, was
sold at 1,400 wŏn among real consumers.94 In 1978, the discrepancy between official price and
market price became more severe, making it even harder for the end users to purchase cement in
the market.95 This scarcity resulted from distorted distribution and illegal dealing conducted by
the monopolized sales agencies. The sales agencies allocated much of the product exclusively to
specific traders after receiving “additional money (P’ürimiôm).”96 The retail price, accordingly,
continued to increase. The end users including the farmers, who had to resume their construction
projects in these harsh market conditions, had no choice but to purchase the cement despite the
increasing price. The farmers sold their cattle or took out loans from private loaners and
relatives.97

94 “Silsuŏpkye chujang. ‘Siment’ū k’arŭt’el chûkkak haech’e twaeya mattang’ [‘Cement cartel must be broken up,’
asserts actual user industries], Maeil kyŏngje 31 October 1977.
95 “Sasŏl: Siment’ū k’arŭt’el īl haech’e hara” [Editorial: Disband the cement cartel!], Tonga ilbo 25 May 1978;
“Sasŏl: Siment’ū p’adong ī munjechôm” [Editorial: Problems of the cement shock], Tonga ilbo 2 May 1978;
“P’adong chojanghan k’arŭt’el, Siment’ū kongp’an hoesa Sŏhan Sirŏp pujŏng anp’ak” [Cartel instigated cement
shock, Scandal of Sŏhan Business Corporation for cement joint-sale], Maeil kyŏngje 24 May 1978; “Sobijadŏl 7, 8-
yŏn tongan p’ihae” [Consumers suffer damages for seven to eight years], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 23 May 1978.
96 “Sasŏl: Siment’ū k’arŭt’el īl haech’e hara” [Editorial: Disband the cement cartel!], Tonga ilbo 25 May 1978;
“Sasŏl: Siment’ū p’adong ī munjechôm” [Editorial: Problems of the cement shock], Tonga ilbo 2 May 1978;
“P’adong chojanghan k’arŭt’el, Siment’ū kongp’an hoesa Sŏhan Sirŏp pujŏng anp’ak” [Cartel instigated cement
97 “3-nan kyŏknŭn nongch’on chut’aek kaeryang saŏp” [Rural Housing Improvement Project suffers from three
difficulties], Chungang ilbo 22 May 1978.
CHAPTER 3

<Picture 3.8> Construction Materials Exhibited for the Rural Housing Improvement Project

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok iii taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksas [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 188)

<Picture 3.9> Cement for the Rural Housing Improvement Project 1

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok iii taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksas [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 181)
<Picture 3.10> Cement for the Rural Housing Improvement Project 2

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjongguk nongch’on chut’ae keryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ui taeyoksasa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 181)
Conclusion

Farmers’ debt capital and consumption provided a reliable domestic market for manufacturers, maintaining the unequal exchange relationship between agriculture and manufacturing. In this finance-mediated exchange system and manufacturing-centred economy, not only the farmers’ debt for consumption, but also their future production was to be channeled into non-agricultural industries by the financial institutions’ absorption of farmers’ regular savings and repayments. The key to this flow of capital lay in securing a means of collecting loans from farmers. In order to do so, the rural housing improvement project and its loan program called on the individual farmer to serve as a dutiful debtor, preparing for diverse income boosting programs. Farmers took out loans to purchase manufactured construction materials, and then had to sell their agricultural (or sometimes non-agricultural) products for the purpose of repaying those loans. In this way, financial loans made farmers engage more actively in the exchange relationship between agriculture and manufacturing in the market. Eventually, rural housing strengthened the foundation for a renewed relationship of unequal exchange mediated by a deeper dependency on financial capital; a relationship that was effectively maintained and reinforced through the market.

The position of the agricultural economy, effectively trapped in an unequal exchange relationship with urban manufacturing, was concealed within the contrasting representations of developed urban and underdeveloped rural space. Attempts through the New Village Movement to employ a ‘strategy of spatio-visual representation,’ to undermine the visual contrast between the countryside and the city did have a significant impact on the face of the rural space. However,

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98 Naemubu chibang haengjöngguk nongch’on chut’ae’ksa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ūi taeöksa: Nongch’on chut’ae’ksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 250-252)
in doing so the New Village Movement only exacerbated the relative poverty of the farmers that grew from the process of the exchange. At this point, it becomes evident that the spatio-visual representation of the countryside concealed the exchange relationship between agriculture and manufacture, and at the same time thereby worked for the maintenance and expansion of that unequal relationship.
Chapter 4
A Home with a Television

At the same time that the Roof Improvement Project “triggered” changes to rural space in the early 1970s, the government concurrently promoted a diverse range of rural construction projects to further transform the residential environment under the name of the New Village Movement. These work projects touched almost every feature of residential infrastructure: building simple facilities for water and sewage, renovating walls, kitchens, and toilets, and bringing electricity into houses. As part of this suite of initiatives, the Rural Housing Improvement Project of the late 1970s was the final stage of a continuous state-led construction plan.

As a result of their investment in labour and funds into these projects, farmers suffered considerable financial difficulties. Many were also exhausted by the importunate and repeated demands from administrative authorities. Yet, with their techno-coloured roof and ‘urban style cultural house,’ the government propagandized modernization, development, and ultimately the

legitimacy of the military regime’s rule. Depending upon the extracted debt capital from the farmers, particular manufacturers of construction materials were able to overcome their accumulation crisis and finally grow into international conglomerates.

A succession of rural housing initiatives not only altered the external appearance of the farmhouse and village, but also restructured the interior space of the individual home. As this chapter will examine, the re-created domestic space was, most of all, a vehicle for farmers’ private consumer desires; at the same time, it served as a kind of commercial showcase where farmer-consumers were making material-cultural dynamics among themselves through the new commodities. The farmers revealed their aspiration and mutual competition for brand-new commodities inside their new homes. This aspect was in clear conflict with the aforementioned financial strain and apathy produced in the countryside by the modernization projects. However, this seeming contradiction helps account for how the New Village projects were able to advance throughout the 1970s despite the farmers’ continued complaints regarding their fatigue and hardship. Rather than simply forcing farmers to submit to state policy, a number of the New Village projects indeed depended on mobilization, not only of their labour and funds, but also of their consumer desires.

The most prominent changes of the new interior space resulted from the installation of electricity and the enlargement of house size. In order to bring electricity into their homes and villages as quickly as possible, many farmers, rather than wait to be selected as a part of the government loan program, impatiently put their own funds into the construction of needed infrastructure. A similar dynamic also occurred in the process of making decision on the size and model of their new houses. Although it was widely understood that the total cost of construction increased as floor space increased, farmers often ended up choosing blueprints for houses that
exceeded their budgetary limits. The average size of a newly constructed farmhouse in the late 1970s reached 192% of the former main farmhouse building.\(^3\) This size was 28% larger than the government’s recommendation.\(^4\) Looking at a next-door neighbour’s spacious Western-style house with fluorescent lights, even the most stubborn rural villagers tended to change their minds about the housing project.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, farmers purchased a massive amounts of construction material to build their new roofs and new houses. In the process, the countryside emerged as a new market for manufacturers. Now, the interior space of the reconstructed houses was swiftly transforming farmers into customers of a more diverse collection of commodities. The spacious interior of homes with electricity was optimized to bring various cutting-edge furniture and electric home appliances. Experts such as electricians, carpenters, painters, and wallpaper hangers introduced trendy interior styles and fancy ornaments for the rural home owners. Yet, the well decorated interior design of the next-door house itself performed an instructional role as well. As if entering a commercial showcase, villagers often gathered at their neighbours’ homes to ‘study’ how to decorate their own house and what to buy to fill the newly expanded, empty new space; of course, they did not forget to consult with the home owner with a good sense of home design. Such a consumer interior space even influenced one young man’s choice of career in Yŏngdong County.\(^5\) In 1977, the young man opened an electric shop in a

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town near his home village after completing his military service. His father wanted him to assist with family farming but he believed, “[With my repair service fees] it is no problem at all to pay for one or two workers [for the farm].”

A television was the most popular and overwhelming commodity, and was always positioned literally at the centre of interior space and domestic life. In 1971, only 10% of farm households had a TV, but by 1979 that percentage had gone up to 80%. Whether a family had a TV or not was explicitly advertised by the antenna that rose above the roof; in this sense, the final touch to the roof improvement project was to buy a TV set and set up an antenna. Many thought that living without a TV would give an impression of being outdated or old-fashioned. Moreover, it was hard to deal with children’s complaints for a TV, however stubborn the parents might be. In the midst of this TV boom in the countryside, the Samsung Electronics group established its initial business foundation. Today, Samsung Electronics is the most representative transnational corporate group in South Korea, but it was a late entry into the electronics industry of the early 1970s. Samsung sought for a way to expand its market share in the growing TV consumption in the countryside, and developed marketing strategies targeting farming consumers.

Samsung Electronics’ rapid growth in the 1970s was due to the farmers’ purchasing power. Yet, this disposable capital largely came from usurious loans offered by retailers under the façade of a burden-free instalment sale. To help alleviate this financial burden, there was a campaign suggesting that grown children living in large cities buy and send a TV set for their parents who remained in the home town. At the time, people referred to such televisions as

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6 “Nongch’on suyo chŏbyŏn hwaktae e churyŏk” [Electronic manufacturers concentrate on expanding the base of rural demand], Maeil kyŏngje 12 April 1975; “Nongsusanbu chosa nongga munhwa yongp’um poyu nūrū” [Farm households possess more culture products, reports Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery], Maeil kyŏngje 19 May 1981; Yi Man-gap. 1984. Kongŏp palchŏn kwa Han ‘guk nongch’on [Industrial Development and the Korean Rural Village]. Seoul: Sŏul taehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu. (p. 37)
“Hyodo TV (filial piety TV).”7 If the Hyodo TV campaign depended on familial relationships, so-called “Saemaül TV” was a product of the state’s own political purpose. Starting in 1974, the government facilitated the distribution among poor farmers of a low budget television called Saemaül TV. Addressing widespread demand for televisions in the countryside, this policy planned to expand the foundation of domestic electronics industry, and more importantly, the network for government propaganda.

A television, as a physical object, was indeed a spatial commodity. It was a ‘must-have’ item that uniformly filled the new consumer space in the countryside. Sitting in the deep private space, the TV proliferated consumer desires among viewers both through programming and commercials; the consumer desires did not have any distinction between the countryside and the city. As Lynn Spiegel expressed in her study on television, the TV was “modernity’s ultimate ‘space-merging’ technology.”8

Indeed, the gap between the countryside and the city narrowed in terms of consumer desires. However, agricultural products were still being exchanged unequally with manufactured commodities in the market. The low income level of agricultural producers could not keep up with all of the advertised fantasy and lifestyle on TV, and thereby was again producing a feeling of alienation among farm households from the growing consumption culture.

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7 Yu Son-yŏng, Pak Yong-gyu, Yi Sang-gil, et al., ed. 2007. Han’guk ŭi m̀id̀o sahoe munhwasa [A Sociocultural History of Korean Media]. Seoul: Han’guk ŭllo chaedan. (p. 452); “Nae kohyang e TV-radio rûl” [Send televisions and radios to my hometown], Choson ilbo 3 September 1970.
A Larger House with Electricity

From early on in the campaign’s implementation, the New Village Movement emphasized displays of the outward changes being made to the countryside of the 1970s. At the same time, and in a way that was no less apparent, the movement also altered the interior space of farmhouses both functionally and structurally. Under the slogans of new village construction, the rural electrification project had brought electric supply facilities into almost every rural village before the outset of the housing project, and the subsequent rebuilding of farmhouse greatly increased the dimensions of rooms and other indoor space. Through this process of electrifying and enlarging their homes, farmers often revealed an impatience to put their own funds into the construction of the electricity infrastructure and connect to new utilities as quickly as possible. They also unveiled a competitive aspiration to have more spacious and luxurious houses in spite of increasing financial challenges.

As discussed in the previous chapters, farmers felt the strain of the continuous new renovations, for which the state forced them to use their own funds and labour. When this aspect is considered, the farming residents’ ‘change of attitude’ could be read as an apparent contradiction. However, this discrepancy in farmers’ attitude towards the New Village Movement paradoxically explains how the campaign could advance throughout the 1970s among farmers who continued to complain about the state’s importunate demands. Farmers were not simply subservient or submissive to the state’s policy; instead, many of the New Village projects advanced through mobilization, not only of farmers’ labour and funds, but also of their consumer desire.

Like thatched roofs, electricity had been a strong spatio-visual indicator defining the dynamics between the countryside and the city. The spatial dichotomy between the rural and the
urban was often heard in the countryside. For a rural resident by the name of Yi Chŏng-hŭi, dinner under an electric light was a specific wish loaded with meaning. Yi was depressed at the reality that, after hard day of work in the fields, he had to eat dinner on the low dining table that was set under a dim oil lamp; a place setting so dark that he had no clear sense about what kind of side dishes were set up or even where they were located. Yi wanted to emphasize that his wish was rather modest by cynically stating, “We’re never envious of urbanites (Tosiin) who are hanging around entertainment venues full of brilliant and colourful neon signs.” This statement, however, rested on a vivid and contrasting image of the colourfully lit city and the dark countryside. In an equally cynical tone, another rural resident, Yu Sŏng-dae, also distinguished the countryside and the city with an image of the light and darkness. For Yu, the city was a place of “civilization” where night and day electric lights brightened streets, signboards, and even home toilets; conversely, many rural villagers were working and studying with only a small kerosene lamp, while electric light was still taken as the “mysterious work of God.”

The tempo of rural electrification matched that of the roof improvement project; when the roofing campaign was almost finished, rural electrification came to completion as well. By the request of the Economic Development Plans and manufacturing industries, the Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) had developed electric power resources with the government’s investment since the early 1960s. As a result, starting around 1964, KEPCO had enough power reserves to concentrate on the sale of surplus power, and seriously examined ways to acquire

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9 “Chŏndo’ng mit esŏ chŏnyŏk mŏgŏssamyŏn” [My hope to have dinner under electric light], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 5 July 1967.
10 “Nongch’on wanjŏn chŏnhwa rŭl, Ŭnje kkaji horongpul man k’yŏya hana” [For the complete electrification of the countryside; Until when do we have to use only a kerosene lamp?], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 19 October 1970.
new markets in the rural areas. In 1965, the government promulgated the Act on the Promotion of Electrification in Agricultural and Fishing Villages by which fiscal loans could partially support the cost of the exterior wiring needed to bring power from transmission facilities into each village. Yet, it was not until the 1970s that, in connection with and under the name of the New Village Movement, rural electrification made rapid progress. According to data provided by KEPCO, the rate of electrified households in rural areas stayed at only 23.4% in 1969, but it reached 93.5% in 1976 and reportedly almost “100%” (approx. 2,754,600 farm households) in 1978.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of the Rural Houses Electrified (thousand)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One Year</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>(317.9)</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>356.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>421.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Houses Electrified</th>
<th>Total Sum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>466.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>520.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>593.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>683.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>171.9</td>
<td>855.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>177.0</td>
<td>1,032.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>284.5</td>
<td>1,317.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>177.1</td>
<td>1,494.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>611.3</td>
<td>2,105.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>470.4</td>
<td>2,576.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>120.0</td>
<td>2,696.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>2,754.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sum</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,754.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a village was selected as the target site of electrification, the expenditure for the installation was relatively less burdensome to farmers, as compared to other government-led construction projects at the time. Villagers were able to take out a loan covering up to 80 - 90% of the total cost from KEPCO which was supported by the government’s fiscal plan.\textsuperscript{16} The loan could be repaid over the course of 30 years at a low interest rate and with a five-year deferred period.\textsuperscript{17} Farmers could complete the construction generally for less than 10,000 wŏn at their own immediate expense.\textsuperscript{18} However, extremely destitute households were still troubled by such expenses.\textsuperscript{19} The financial burden was even greater for those in villages excluded from the state electrification plan but that pushed forward independently for construction without government loans. As seen in Table 4.1, rural electrification drastically increased especially for two years in 1975 and 1976 when the project was almost finalized. This was due to the increase of farm households that independently constructed electric facilities without waiting to be selected as a part of government’s electrification project. In spite of the costs, 709,400 farm households,


roughly 65.6% of the 1,081,700 houses that were electrified between 1975 and 1976, financed installation at their own expense.20

At this juncture, a question arises. Why did so many farmers and villages endure the financial burden to start the construction? The answer is found in Yi Chŏng-hŭi’s modest wish to have dinner under an electric light and Yu Sŏng-dae’s grievance against ‘uncivilized’ rural life. Their observation of neighbouring villages’ electrified life may have fostered farmers’ impatient aspirations for electricity. This circumstantial assumption becomes more plausible when informed by a rural resident’s embarrassing experience. Chŏe Kyu-yong, a resident of Yŏngdong County, recounted that he could not find a decent answer to his children’s question asking why only their family lacked electric lights at the time when neighbouring villages were all enjoying the utility.21 The sense of awkwardness expressed by Chŏe when confronted by his children points to the affective dynamics at work in the process of rural electrification. In 1977, a news article described farmers’ strong wish for electricity as “fervent desire toward electricity (Chŏn’gi e taehan yŏlmang)” or “persistent appetite (Kkŭnjilgin yokku).”22 Elsewhere it is mentioned that, relatively speaking, farmers were more generous to donate their land to erect electric power poles than for any other village works project.23 Most farmers readily agreed to electrification construction in their village, and evaluated it as one of the best works.24 Many

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21 “Pissan nongch’on chŏnhwabi, yŏnh’ajŏk sisŏl kyeheok chaejŏng chiwŏn’l” [Expensive rural electrification; Facility planning and financial support required yearly], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 November 1970.
village leaders remember the electrification of village as a monumental and boastful achievement in the history of their villages. As such, the cost performance of rural electrification, satisfaction for its price, was high to farmers.

When the electrification (and roofing) neared completion around 1977 and 1978, the government launched the Rural Housing Improvement Project. Often incurring huge debts, in the last years in the 1970s, farmers built a total of 185,782 houses across the countryside. The most impressive change in the constructed houses lay in their larger size, which accommodated more household electrical appliances and modern furniture. Initially the Ministry of Home Affairs expected that about 70% of the housing owners would prefer the smallest house model of 15 p’yŏng (49.6 m²) due to their financial constraints. Following such an expectation, budgetary plans for the Rural Housing Instalment were prepared with a focus on the most economical model. However, in the end over 70% of the housing owners wished to build larger houses of 18, 20, or 25 p’yŏng despite their increasing debt load. According to a statistic, 77.5% of the newly constructed rural houses, which were enabled by the housing loans in 1978 and 1979,
were larger than 18 p’yŏng (59.5 m²). This size was considerably larger than former farmhouses with a main building (Anch’ae), which averaged only 10 p’yŏng (33.1 m²).

Farmers carried with them a fear of debt but their desire for a larger house was much stronger. The residents of Pirae-1 Village in Taedŏk County were hesitant about constructing new houses at first, thinking it “staggeringly hazardous.” Yet, once one of their neighbours, Yi Yŏng-sik, completed his Western-style house (Yangok) of 18 p’yŏng (59.5 m²), the villagers rushed to examine the new structure and “enviously” began to say, “If I’m going to build a new house at all, I’d better build a more spacious and better house than others” or “I’ll have to build my house well because it will be left to my son and again my grandson for generations.” In this way, Yi’s house contributed to an atmosphere of competition that accompanied the mandated house reconstruction. Likewise, Kim Sŏng-hak’s new house in Sŏkso Village of Ch’ŏngwŏn County promoted neighbouring villagers’ competitive spirit for larger houses. Most Sŏkso villagers, who finished building new houses in 1977, followed the government’s standardized blueprint of 20 p’yŏng (66.1 m²). Yet, Kim amended the designs and completed a house with a slightly larger main room and floor. His house was regarded as the best built one in the village. More than 50 people from remote villages visited his place “for a study tour” in the year to
follow its construction. Moreover, Sŏkso residents frequently held village meetings at Kim’s place, further emphasizing the necessity of a large house.

Farmers’ growing desire to have larger houses often brought about changes to the standardized designs, which were issued by the Rural Housing Improvement Project for the purpose of efficiency and cost reduction in construction.34 Nam Mun-sang and his wife, residents of Sŏsan County, could not sleep well after making a decision to build their new house.35 The financial issue was worrisome, but they were more excited at the prospect of having a completely new Western-style house for the first time in their life. Nam and his wife stayed up till late every night to discuss which blueprint would be best for them among the 12 designs given to choose from. After repeated and careful consideration, they finally picked one type from among 18 p’yŏng (59.5 m²). However, even after selecting the design, their discussions did not stop. The couple agreed that they needed a little larger rooms and kitchen than the ones in their current blueprint. Even though they could not use cheaper standard construction materials due to the amendment of the original blueprint, their completed house met their wish for larger space in the end.

In this way, the average size of new rural houses reached to 19.2 p’yŏng (63.5 m²), among 85,000 houses that were constructed in 1978 and 1979 through the government’s loan program.36 This was much larger as compared to the average size of the former main farmhouse

35 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (164): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (23), Kyugyŏk chajae” [New trend in the countryside (164): Housing revolution (23), Standardized construction materials], Kyŏnghyang simmun 11 July 1978.
building, 10 p’yŏng (33.1 m²), and even the government’s projected size of 15 p’yŏng (49.6 m²).³⁷ For most of the farmers, to construct a new house was a monumental event in their lives.³⁸ Many believed that the expensive Western-style house would be turned over to their descendants.³⁹ In addition, considering the inconvenience they experienced in their former houses, residents concluded that the house under construction needed to be large enough, despite the heavier financial burden.⁴⁰

**Consumer Interior Space**

The change brought on by electrification was no less sensational than the colourful roofs that enlivened the South Korean countryside. People described the changes taking place in rural areas with expressions more commonly applied to descriptions of the Age of Enlightenment, saying that the countryside was no longer left in the “black night (Amhŭk ŭi pam)” but was completely

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³⁹ “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (142): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (1), Chut’aek kaeryang” [New trend in the countryside (142): Housing revolution (1), Housing improvement], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 8 May 1978; “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (154): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (13), Saem sotmŭn ŭyŏk” [New trend in the countryside (154): Housing revolution (13), Morale goes up], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 3 June 1978; “Nongch’on to tŏ k’un chip ūl wŏnhanda” [Rural villages also want larger houses], Han’guk ilbo 1 March 1978.


⁴¹ “Pissan nongch’on chŏnhwabi, yŏnch’ajŏk sisŏl kyeheok chaejŏng chiwŏn ūl” [Expensive rural electrification; Facility planning and financial support required yearly], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 November 1970.
“liberated from the darkness of night (Óduun pam ërobût’ö haebang).”\textsuperscript{42} One feature article described how, “as electricity comes, the streets in the countryside become full of energy and of a look fresh like the outskirts of the cities. … when the night comes, acrylic signs try hard to resemble urban night street.”\textsuperscript{43} The electrified countryside was spatio-visually represented as the place of brightness and suburbanization. As with the techno-colours of slated roofs, the brightness of electric lamps in and outside farm houses also symbolized rural transformation, a display of the intended ‘development’ during the construction period of New Village Movement.

Electricity did not only appeal to the sense of sight, but also to the sense of hearing. One study on the rural electrification of the New Village Movement points out the auditory change in the countryside, stating, “Most of all, the electrified village was noisy.”\textsuperscript{44} It was about this time that electric speakers and amplifiers began to wake up rural villagers at 6 a.m. with loud renditions of the national anthem, propaganda songs of the New Village Movement, and diverse public announcements on matters such as tax dues, civil defence training, and farming techniques.\textsuperscript{45} Encountering popular go-go rhythm at every turn was also another electrified experience to everyone in the countryside.\textsuperscript{46} Depending on the same infrastructure, the government spread propaganda, and villagers circulated popular songs.

\textsuperscript{43} “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (30): Ch’uksa ekkaji chŏnhwa, Saengsansŏng nop’ir’yŏ” [New trend in the countryside (30): Even cattle shed and pigsty electrified to boost productivity], Kyônghyang sinmun 15 July 1977.
\textsuperscript{46} “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (30): Ch’uksa ekkaji chŏnhwa, Saengsansŏng nop’ir’yŏ” [New trend in the countryside (30): Even cattle shed and pigsty electrified to boost productivity], Kyônghyang sinmun 15 July 1977.
In a sense, as compared to such experiences of electrified life, another change effected by a larger house was increased privacy. To take a somewhat crude joke at face value, under an assumption that rearranged space could change ‘relationships’ as well, the conjugal relation of Mr. Kim in Myŏngju County was said to be much improved thanks to the family’s new larger house. Mr. Kim had lived in a two bed room farmhouse of 13 p’yŏng (43 m²) with his aged mother, wife, and five children until he completed a new house of 22 p’yŏng (72.7 m²) in 1977. After moving into the new house, he often made a joke to his friends, smiling lewdly, “I feel like I’ve newly married since my wife and I began to share the same room alone after a long separation.”

As seen in the aforementioned examples, electrification and an enlarged house had a significant influence on daily experiences and lifestyles in the countryside. Yet, a more comprehensive change to rural everydayness was found in the process by which the electrified and enlarged space introduced new commodities into the domestic life, and in the dynamics that developed among the rural consumers.

As electricity came into their houses, farmers began to purchase not only light bulbs but also expensive electrical appliances. Following only television sets in popularity, record players were particularly sought-after items. Music overheard by close neighbours sometimes stimulated another consumer desire. Mr. Yang in Ch’ŏngyang County sold off a cow and bought a record player, saying, “The next door people turned their record player on so loud all day long from morning to night that I also bought one in a fit of temper.”

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47 “Nongch’ŏn sae p’ungsokto (155): Chugŏ pyŏnyŏk (14), Munhwa chut’ae’k” [New trend in the countryside (155): Housing revolution (14), Cultural house], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 5 June 1978.
48 “Nongch’ŏn sae p’ungsokto (23): Chŏnech’uk (1), Much’wimi mujŏngsŏ rŭl pŏnmŭnda” [New trend in the countryside (23): Record player (1), Removing the want for hobbies and taste], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 30 June 1977.
the newly electrified rural houses were soon filled with trendy popular music. The expansion of music market in the rural areas brought professional singers to the local stages in front of farmers. After a couple of no-named singers launched their careers through the rural music market, entering onto the stages of Seoul with great success, popular singers also began to tour rural towns to introduce their new songs and appeal to local fans.49

The larger interior space equipped with electricity served as a type of ‘spatial container’ for growing consumer desire, especially for electric appliances and modern furniture. Frequently quoting the phrase “New wine, new wineskins,” farmers began to purchase brand-new furniture and large household appliances to fill the interior space.50 Pae Ch’a-ryong, a farmer in Kimhae County, said in 1977, “Since I built a house, I’ve felt all of the old furniture was not a good match with the new house. So I bought a totally new furniture package.”51 The main room (Anbang), traditionally the most important space in farm households, was usually given over to the television set. Farmers tended to consider a TV set as a piece of furniture, so they preferred a large one with a console over 19 inches in size.52 As a simple example that shows the relationship between the new housing and the spread of TV sets, P’ungjŏng Village of Ch’ŏngwŏn County reported that, out of 25 households in total, the number of TV sets in the district increased from 4 to 23, after the construction of village houses in 1978.53 Describing such explosive consumption of electric appliances in the countryside on a national scale, a

49 “Nongch’ŏn sae p’ungsokto (23): Chŏnch’ŭk (1), Much’wimi mujŏngsŏ rŭl pŏnnǔnda” [New trend in the countryside (23): Record player (1), Removing the want for hobbies and taste], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 30 June 1977.
51 “Tosihyŏng ūr t’albakkum, Nongch’ŏn ch’wirak kujo – Nŭngsŏn wi e wŏnsaek maŭl Kimhae-gun Chinyŏng-ŏp Och’ŏk purak” [Rural village structure completely changes into urban style; Primary coloured village on the ridge – Och’ŏk village in Chinyŏng Town, Kimhae County], Chosŏn ilbo 20 December 1977.
52 “Naengjanggo TV t’ung chŏnja chep’um, Sodosi nongch’on sŏ tŏ chal p’allinda” [Electric home appliances such as refrigerators and televisions sold more in the countryside than in the city], Tonga ilbo 1 December 1977.
newspaper article asserted that “the most outstanding exterior changes in the rural area for the past couple of years are the flood of electric home appliances rushing in from the city along with the rural housing improvement.”

In counterflow with the rushing manufactured products, farmers’ capital readily went to the manufacturers. In 1978, Ch’ŏe Kyŏng-sŏn in Wanju County sold off a cow to fill his living room with a sofa set, and Pak ήn-gyu in Ch’ŏngwŏn County sold a pig to present his main room with a large TV set. These explicit acts of exchange not only sustained the uneven urban-rural relationship, but they were also features of a shift in consumption patterns.

The farmers’ new living space itself also played the role of a ‘showcase’ for displaying various luxury products, stimulating and spreading the desire of consumption among the village residents. For instance, Kim Sŏn-yŏl’s new house of 25 p’yŏng (82.6 m²) in Chusu-1 Village of Myŏngju County was like a typical model residence built at a commercial exhibition for interior decoration industries. His house was fully decorated with aluminum windows frames and a chandelier worth 7,000 wŏn. He embellished the walls and ceiling of the living room with decorative plywood, and covered the floors of two rooms with vinyl flooring instead of usual oiled floor paper. He was proud of the vinyl flooring, which cost him as much as 18,000 wŏn. All the rooms were also papered with high quality wallpaper, which required 10,000 wŏn per room. In addition to everything else, he spent 150,000 wŏn more to buy a Formica wardrobe.

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54 “Kŏn’guk 30-yŏn set’ae 30-yŏn (5): Chaenggi esŏ kyŏngun’gi kkaji” [30th anniversary of founding the nation and 30 years of social change (5): From plough to rotary tiller], Tonga ilbo 21 August 1978.
55 “Sae nongch’on ŭi chŏn’gae, Chŏnbuk Wanju-gun Changdong-ri Pudong ma’ul” [Inauguration of new rural village: At Pudong village in Changdong-ri, Wanju County, North Chŏlla Province], Sŏul sinmun 19 April 1978.
inlaid with mother-of-pearl. According to Mr. Kim’s calculations, interior decoration cost him 500,000 won in total since the construction of the house. Mr. Kim’s neighbours frequently visited the well decorated house, and “asked for consultation.” Following Mr. Kim’s tips on interior design, each household in the village spent from 200,000 won to 500,000 won for decoration on the top of construction expenses. This was at the time when 75% of the housing owners affected by the Rural Housing Improvement Project had an annual income below a million won.58

Carpenters, painters, and electricians, who worked on making improvements to rural houses, evangelized trendy urban interior styles and products among the farmers.59 They often gave the farmers professional advice on how to arrange the assortment of new goods. Electricians, who came to install a television set, tended to advise the house owners to put a glass doll display case on the top of the television console. Wallpaper hangers often told the farmers to hang a picture of a pastoral landscape on the wall like in a decent urban living room, instead of a dowdy array of family photos. In such an atmosphere, farmers’ taste for interior products was gradually brought into conformity with the preference for slightly more expensive, better quality products. Cho Myŏng-man, an electrician in a rural area, stated in 1978, “Since they built new houses, farmers who were looking for the cheapest incandescent light bulbs last year, all have turned their eyes to the decorative fluorescent lamps.”60 According to Cho’s additional explanation on his sales, relatively expensive fluorescent lamps of 3,000 to 4,000 won gained

60 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (160): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (19), Chiban ch’ijang” [New trend in the countryside (160): Housing revolution (19), Decoration of interior space], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 1 July 1978.
wide popularity among farmers whereas 60-watt incandescent lamps had been driven out from
the main rooms to the outhouse toilet or the gate.61

With the boom of rural housing construction and the completion of electrification,
famous furniture companies and electric home appliance manufacturers began to open their
authorized retail stores even in the smallest rural towns and townships.62 Hong Üi-nam in Asan
County expressed his satisfaction about the convenience of this change, saying, “There is no
need to worry any more about getting ripped off or deceived to buy low-quality goods, because
authorized retail stores for the famous makers of electric appliances, furniture, curtains have
entered all the towns (Up).”63 At this juncture, the farmers’ interior space was not only working
as a container for consumer desires, a products showcase for spreading the competitive desire, or
a place of evangelism for uniformed consumption style, but it also acted as strong incentive to
attract urban capital and thereby change the consumer geography of the rural areas. By now, it
was hard for even those who did not build a new house to keep ignoring the many goods made
available through easily accessible stores. Looking at the neighbours’ well-decorated houses,
many farmers living in small houses started remodelling and expansion projects on their old

61 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (160): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (19), Chiban ch’ijang” [New trend in the countryside (160):
Housing revolution (19), Decoration of interior space], Kyŏngyang sinmun 1 July 1978.
62 “Nongch’on suyo chŏhyŏn hwaktae e churyŏk” [Electronic manufacturers concentrate on expanding the base of
rural demand], Maeil kyŏngje 12 April 1975; “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (19): TV side (5), Milgo tanggigo…
P’anmae kyŏngjaeng man’t’ae” [New trend in the countryside (19): Television era (5), Push and pull of bargaining…
Various phases of sales competition], Kyŏngyang sinmun 21 June 1977; “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (29):
Nongmin changnong sok kyŏngyang ch’iyŏlhan p’ammaejon” [New trend in the countryside (29): Fierce sales war
aims inside farmers’ wardrobe], Kyŏngyang sinmun 12 July 1977; “Naengjianggo TV t’ung chŏnja chep’um, Sodosi
nongch’on só t’o chal p’allinda” [Electric home appliances such as refrigerators and televisions sold more in the
countryside than in the city], Tonga ilbo 1 December 1977; “TV naengjanggo set’aki t’ung kajŏn chep’um
nongch’on pogyŏn kŭpch’ung” [Home appliances such as televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines spread fast
in the countryside], Kyŏngyang sinmun 7 December 1978; “Sŏnp’unggi naenjanggo, Nonghyŏp yŏnswaegŏm iyŏng
k’ûge nŭro” [Sales of Electric fan and refrigerator grows; Farmers use chain stores of Agricultural Cooperatives
Samsŏng chŏnja isimnyŏnsa [A Twenty Year History of the Samsung Electronics Company]. Seoul: Samsŏng
chŏnja.(pp. 200-201)
63 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (160): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (19), Chiban ch’ijang” [New trend in the countryside (160):
Housing revolution (19), Decoration of interior space], Kyŏngyang sinmun 1 July 1978.
houses. Needless to say, the newly expanded rooms and heightened ceilings were spaces that were specifically prepared to introduce new furniture and electric home appliances.\(^{64}\)

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<Picture 4.1> Interior Space of New Rural Houses

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjongguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs], 1979. Minjok ii taeyoksa: Nongch’on chut’aeks [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing], Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 52)
The Television Boom

A television set was always the most popular item among the farmers’ ‘must-have’ list for their newly expanded living spaces. Integrated data from TV makers and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries show that the percentage of farm households with a TV set was less than 10% in 1971 but it increased up to almost 80% by 1979.65 This explosive demand for TV sets was simply expressed in the young brides’ trend-sensitive ‘hope chest’ list.66 Starting in the 1970s in the rural areas, sewing machines began to give way to the TV as the first item of necessity for marriage. Electric home appliances like a rice-cooker, rice-warmer, iron, and TV became new requisite items demanded by brides to prepare for marriage in the countryside just as in the city. In particular, a TV set was the most preferred item whereas sewing machine was regarded as a “countrified good.”67 In such an atmosphere, traditional necessities like charcoal irons were thrown away or sold to curio dealers for the urban antique shops.68

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65 According to TV makers’ statistics cited by a newspaper in 1975, only 3.3% of farm households had a TV as of 1971. When the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries did a sample survey of 3,375 farm households on a national scale, the percentage explosively increased to 79.6% in 1979. On the other side, Yi Man-gap’s data on the number of TV sets among farm households reported that the percentage increase was from 9.5% in 1971 to 76.9% in 1979. (“Nongch’on suyo ch’ŏhyŏn hwaktae e charyŏk” [Electronic manufacturers concentrate on expanding the base of rural demand], Maeil kyŏngje 12 April 1975; “Nongsusanbu chosa nongga munhwa yongp’um poyu márrŏ” [Farm households possess more culture products, reports Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery], Maeil kyŏngje 19 May 1981; Yi Man-gap, 1984. Kongp’alchŏn kwa Han’guk nongch’on [Industrial Development and the Korean Rural Village]. Seoul: Sŏul taehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu. (p. 37))


Television did not stay only in the interior space of farm houses. TV was an outwardly visible product, seen clearly through its external antennas. TV aerials rose up over the ‘modernized’ roofs, and thereby represented the change or wealth of the countryside. In this sense, TV was giving a final touch to the new slated-roofs completed under the rural roof improvement project. It was a cliché of the 1970s to describe the ‘eye-opening’ development of

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69 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (14): TV sidae (1), Ch’oga chibung edo ant’ena uttuk” [New trend in the countryside (14): Television era (1), Rising antennas even over thatched roof], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 14 June 1977; “Tumae sankol ch’oga samgan chibung wi tŭnop’i sosŏn TV ant’ena” [Rising television antennas over roof of small thatched house in the backwoods], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 14 June 1977.
the rural areas with the number of visible antennas over the roofs. In 1977, a newspaper article entitled “Rural villages urbanized widely, taking off a thousand years of Barley Hill (Porit kogae) poverty” introduced the ‘change’ of a small rural village in Sŏsan County, writing, “It is now hard to find a village with no TV antenna since the mass distribution of TV sets to the rural areas in 1974 with the electrification project. Among 20 farm houses in total in Taedu 1-Village, Pusŏk Township, Sŏsan County, 18 households have rising antennas, 8 have record players, and 3 even have tape recorders.”

The landscape created by the tall antennas was often expressed as an “antenna-forest (Ant’ena sup).” Living without an antenna in the middle of such a dense canopy of aerials sometimes accompanied self-deprecation about an outdated and outmoded lifestyle. Pak Kyŏng-suk, an urban resident, stated in 1970, “As the year changed and the antennas appeared in every corner of the street, we could not but buy a television just for the sake of not hearing people consider us old-fashioned.” Pak Kyŏng-suk’s urban experience was re-enacted in the countryside as well in the late 1970s. Another urban resident by the name of Pak Hyŏng-gŭn worked in a small city and sometimes visited his rural home town where his parents and younger brother lived together. When he visited his parents’ home in 1979, he had to hear his younger brother pester him to buy a television, saying, “The next door neighbour also bought a television

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70 The Barley Hill (Porit kogae), a metaphorical expression indicating the springtime famine, was the time when farmers impatiently waited for the harvest of barley after all the stored rice had been consumed in winter.
72 “TV ŏpsŏdo chot’a” [It’s all right with no television], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 31 May 1979.
74 “TV ŏpsŏdo chot’a” [It’s all right with no television], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 31 May 1979.
last month. We are now the only ones in the village left without a TV.” Mr. Pak felt sorry for his young brother but, at the same time, however, displeased with the trend that demanded that everyone have a TV placed at the centre of family life. One study on the TV boom asserted that the “displayable” effect of antenna particularly stimulated the desire to possess a TV set more than any of the other home appliances. It was true. As farmers often said, “Once a TV set came to the village, people tended to buy them as part of a chain reaction, even borrowing money to do so.”

The growing rural demand for television sets drew acute attention from TV manufacturers. Major electronics companies such as Samsung, Kŭmsŏng (current LG), and Taihan Chŏnsŏn observed the changing market trends that, starting from the mid-1970s, the rural consumption of electric household appliances had been rapidly increasing whereas the market in cities was saturated. The TV makers actively began to develop marketing strategies targeting farmers, defining the countryside as a promising new market.

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76 “Sach’i p’ungjo tosi esó nongch’ŏn ūro, TV naengjanggo tŭng halbu p’anmae sŏnghaeng” [Tendency toward extravagance moves from the city to the countryside; Installment sale for television and refrigerator prevails], Tonga ilbo 19 November 1974.
77 “Nongch’ŏn suyo chŏbyŏn hwaktae e churyŏk” [Electronic manufacturers concentrate on expanding the base of rural demand], Mael kyŏngje 12 April 1975; “Naengjanggo TV tŭng chŏnja chep’um, Sodosi nongch’ŏn só tŏ chal p’allinda” [Electric home appliances such as refrigerators and televisions sold more in the countryside than in the city], Tonga ilbo 1 December 1977; “TV naengjanggo set’akki tŭng kajŏn chep’um nongch’ŏn pogŏp kŭpch’ung” [Home appliances such as televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines spread fast in the countryside], Kyŏnghyang simmun 7 December 1978.
78 “Nongch’ŏn suyo chŏbyŏn hwaktae e churyŏk” [Electronic manufacturers concentrate on expanding the base of rural demand], Mael kyŏngje 12 April 1975; “Naengjanggo TV tŭng chŏnja chep’um, Sodosi nongch’ŏn só tŏ chal p’allinda” [Electric home appliances such as refrigerators and televisions sold more in the countryside than in the city], Tonga ilbo 1 December 1977; “TV naengjanggo set’akki tŭng kajŏn chep’um nongch’ŏn pogŏp kŭpch’ung” [Home appliances such as televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines spread fast in the countryside], Kyŏnghyang simmun 7 December 1978; “Kajŏn ŏpkye kaŭl tae ŭkmaejŏn torip” [Electronic business starts grand autumn special sale], Mael kyŏngje 20 September 1975.
The first step to dominate the rural market was expressed in the television manufacturers’ competition over the number of authorized retail stores in the countryside. Most TV retailers had been located in the large cities, but from the mid-1970s the number of newly opened retail stores in the countryside exceeded that in the city. For example, at the end of 1974 Samsung had 117 retail agencies in the large cities and only 49 in the rural areas; by the first half of 1976, however, it established 39 more agencies in the countryside whereas only 23 more retail stores were opened in the city. For one and half years, the number of Samsung’s new retail agencies in the rural areas exceeded those in the cities by 62.9% versus 37.1%. The effort to expand new retail stores in the countryside was commonly found in the cases of Kumsŏng and Taihan Chŏnsŏn. As a result, the competition to win over consumers was even sharper among rural TV retailers.

This competition created rather aggressive sales strategies among retailers. Local dealers at the time put a great deal of effort into collecting a wide-range of information about their potential consumers. A type of “informant” infiltrated every village, giving them detailed information such as total number of households in each village, size of farms, income levels, and other private facts. On the basis of this collected data, the TV dealers sometimes made appeals to the ties of blood, school, or hometown with their farmer-customers. For those likely to purchase

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79 “Nongch’on e p’ago t’um’ŏn TV taerijŏm” [Authorized TV retailers penetrating rural villages], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 21 June 1977.
82 “Nongch’on suyo chŏbyŏn hwaktea e churyŏk” [Electronic manufacturers concentrate on expanding the base of rural demand], Maeil kjongje 12 April 1975; “TV naengjanggo set’ak’ki t’um’ kajŏn chep’um nongch’on pôgŭp kŭpch’ung” [Home appliances such as televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines spread fast in the countryside], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 7 December 1978.
a TV set, retailers often provided free rice wine and cigarettes, or gave a ride from the village to the local market. For the fringe villages where the reception of TV signals was poor, local retailers in connection with TV manufacturers promised to install a TV mast free of charge. Faced with such cutthroat competition, there even appeared brokers who introduced customers to the TV retail agencies for a commission of 3,000 to 5,000 wôn per television.84

In addition to branching out into local towns and townships in the countryside, the TV manufacturers also operated mobile repair centres for rural customers.85 Special vehicles equipped with various repair tools and parts travelled year round to villages all over the countryside to meet the farming customers’ requests. This tailored service to rural areas clearly indicates the importance of rural customers to the TV manufacturers.

In particular for Samsung, a late entrant into the electronics industry, the rural market was the only avenue by which to catch up with its established rival, Kŭmsŏng (current LG). Samsung set out to produce electric appliances in the early 1970s and enjoyed rapid growth especially after 1975.86 The dazzling increase in sales in the mid-1970s was attributed to their new marketing strategy based upon the forecasting of market trends and demand at the time. The key feature of this market analysis and strategy was the importance of the rural market. Expecting that rural demand for TV sets would increase due to the growing economy and electrification in rural areas, the new business focus was directed toward farmers on a full scale, leading to the increase of local retail agencies, the expansion of service activities and

advertisements, and the diversification of products in the countryside. In 1977, an advertising phrase of Samsung TV, “Clear and sharp everywhere,” attracted consumers in rural and fringe areas where TV reception was poor. This was more apparent when one of the advertising characters added further explanation, saying, “I have been worried that the mountains would block the television signals, but the TV picture looks clear and sharp enough like that in Seoul.”

*<Picture 4.3> An Advertisement of Samsung Television*

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Samsung’s strategy toward the rural market was successful and by 1978 had finally resulted in the company overtaking its competitors to occupy first place in the domestic market share of televisions.89 Previously, the domestic TV market had been led by the Kūmsŏng, but in 1978, Samsung sold 746,000 TV sets in Korea recording 40.9% domestic market share.90

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Television occupied 36.1% of total domestic sales of Samsung Electronics in 1978.91 Samsung Chaebol group is the premier transnational conglomerate of South Korea today; however, up until the late 1970s approximately 70% sales of its core electronics business depended upon domestic market.92 This initial nurturing of the company through the domestic market, which acted as the foundation for today’s transnational Samsung Corporation, was based on the farmers’ purchasing power and epidemic aspiration for the commodity at the time.

In a broad sense, the farmers’ purchasing power came from debts. Targeting the harvest season, the companies had special fall sales for farmers and sold their television sets on an instalment basis.93 A TV maker attracted customers with advertising, saying, “Enjoy ‘our home with a television’ for only 8,000 won per month.”94 As the advertisement appealed, instalment sales lightened farmers’ burden at the moment of purchase, but there was always high interest charges that were sometimes more predatory than the interest rates of a private loan. In the case of the most expensive charge reported, the ‘monthly’ instalment interest for a TV set

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reached up to 6.3%. There was a reason for such onerous rates. Farmers were always short of cash, but commercial banks did not support loans for the purpose of consumption. Thus, retailers gave farmers a TV set on credit first and collected monthly instalments from them later. In fact, instalment purchase did not differ from a private loan taken out from the dealers. As was often the case with farmers, the monthly interest rate was not clearly marked on the bill at the time, and their aspiration to have a TV set usually overcame rational doubt against abnormally expensive interest.

The farmers’ unquenchable desire to buy television sets was to some degree buttressed by the military regime’s own necessity of another sort. The government subsidized small television manufacturers to produce low budget television called “Saemaŭl TV” so that the technology could come into wide use in the countryside among the farmers in financial difficulty.

In 1973, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced, “The government plans to develop low-priced ‘Saemaŭl TV’ suitable for a farmer and fisherman’s income level and spread it throughout the whole country; this plan is purposed to expand the foundation of domestic consumption and support the government’s public relations, keeping pace with the progress of rural electrification.” As clearly enunciated, the government expected that this more affordable TV could be used as an effective mass medium networked all over the countryside for the

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98 “Saemaŭl TV kaebal kyehŏek” [New Village TV development plan], Maeil kyŏngje 1 June 1973; “Saemaŭl TV kaebal, han tae e samman wŏn sŏn” [New Village TV development, About three thousand wŏn per one], Tonga ilbo 1 June 1973.
government’s propaganda broadcasts as well as activate especially rural market for the domestic electronics industry. At the request of the government, the Korea Institute of Science and Technology developed new manufacturing processes for cost reduction, and from 1974 the subsidized companies began to produce low-end models for the rural areas.99

Conclusion

The rebuilding rural houses was part of a large-scale process of turning the countryside into a stable domestic market for manufactured construction materials. Yet, it was inside the newly completed houses that the farmers’ consumption of manufactured products took place in a more diverse and significant manner. Put differently, by providing an optimized indoor space for the consumption of commodities, the dual completion of the rural electrification project and the rural housing project marked a significant change in the exchange relationship between manufacturing and agriculture.

A television was one of the most representative and symbolic commodities that filled the consumer interior space. The entry of the TV into the indoor space of farm houses seemed to disrupt the spatiotemporal distinction between the city and the countryside, especially through “a flood of commercials”100 that was “infiltrating deep into the private room.”101 The fashion trends of Seoul introduced on TV could be copied by local women only days after being

100 “(Sasŏl) Chaegŏmt’o p’ilyohan TV kwanggo” [Editorial: TV advertisement needs to be reconsidered], Chosŏn ilbo 26 September 1976.
101 “(Sasŏl) T’ellebijŏn kwanggo konghae” [Editorial: TV advertisement pollution], Tonga ilbo 7 September 1976.
broadcasted.102 Children sang the same popular jingles from commercials synchronously both in the countryside and the city.103 Reporting such a phenomenon in rural area, a news article wrote, “If the highway has made the whole nation as a ‘one-day life zone (1-il saenghwalgwŏn, 1 일 생활권)’ in terms of space, TV is making the city and the countryside as a ‘simultaneous life zone (Tongsi saenghwalgwŏn, 동시 생활권)’ in terms of time.”104

Farmer’s television at home expanded the domestic market for the growing electronics capital and reproduced a kind of homogenized consumer desire that would lead to further exchanges in the market between agriculture and manufacturing. However, in spite of the spatial and temporal levelling, the incomes of agricultural producers could not keep up with all of the advertised commodities and luxurious lifestyle on TV. In 1977, Yi Pok-sun, a rural resident near Kyŏngju, worried about her nine-year-old son’s importunate demands for the new products that he saw on TV.105 Yi was not alone in her frustration. In a neighbourhood meeting of 1978, some residents in Yŏngyang County voiced the concern that most of TV shows displayed only images of a luxurious urban lifestyle, producing a sense of inferiority among rural villagers, and added momentum to the ongoing rural exodus.106 The television, a spatial commodity, narrowed the

103 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (20): TV sidae (6), Küpkŏkhi chopyŏjijinŭn tonong kyŏkch’a” [New trend in the countryside (20): Television era (6), Rapidly narrowed gap between the city and the countryside], Kyŏngyang sinmun 22 June 1977.
104 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (20): TV sidae (6), Küpkŏkhi chopyŏjijinŭn tonong kyŏkch’a” [New trend in the countryside (20): Television era (6), Rapidly narrowed gap between the city and the countryside], Kyŏngyang sinmun 22 June 1977.
105 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (20): TV sidae (6), Küpkŏkhi chopyŏjijinŭn tonong kyŏkch’a” [New trend in the countryside (20): Television era (6), Rapidly narrowed gap between the city and the countryside], Kyŏngyang sinmun 22 June 1977.
106 “TV p’ŭro ka inong puch’aejil” [TV shows add momentum to the ongoing rural exodus], Tonga ilbo 3 March 1978.
gap between the countryside and the city in terms of consumer desire; however, at home, it was increasing a feeling of alienation among the farming consumers from the consumption culture.
“Liberation from the thatched-roof house, liberation from the oil lamplight, and liberation from the A-frame carrier.” The 1970s was full of slogans. The above motto was one of them, appearing at a local officials meeting in 1971. More than two decades had passed since the end of Japanese colonial rule, but every day Koreans still sought liberations from the past. It was clear that the first two “liberations (Haebang)” expressed a statement relating to the roofing and electrification projects, while the last phrase required a more complex and comprehensive alteration of conditions. The A-frame carrier (Chige) is a traditional Korean back-carrier made of wood. By the time of the New Village Movement, it had come to symbolize backwards farming methods still remaining in the period of rapid industrialization. “Liberation” from the A-frame carrier essentially meant bringing in modern means of transport like trucks and other agro-machines; but to do so, it was necessary to expand roads and infrastructure as a precondition. Embedded in the phrase for the emancipation of farmers from Chige was an appeal, not only for the mechanization of farming and transportation methods, but also for the general restructuring of village space.

The issues of village design and production system have always been intertwined in rural areas. Given this structural context, a complete restructuring into urban-style houses and village complexes was understood as necessary spatial conditions for mechanized agriculture, cooperative farming, and finally, the increase of agricultural productivity. The following sections

1 “Pŭrip’ing-syo’yŏnch’ul e pappa” [Local officials meeting is busy briefing just for show], Maeil kyŏngje 17 July 1971.
of this chapter will delve into the relationships between the renovated farmhouse, restructured village layout, and agricultural production in the New Village Movement of the 1970s. Consequently, this chapter will shift the focus to the outside space of new homes and to the issue of production.

As the first section of this chapter will show, the new rural houses under construction in the 1970s were often called “urban style houses (Tosihyŏng chut’aek)” or “cultural houses (Munhwa chut’aek),”\(^2\) representing a kind of spatial unification or homogenization between domiciles in the countryside and the city. The design of the urban-style cultural farmhouse paid particular attention to ways of dividing living spaces from workplaces, which were often integrated in earlier designs for farmhouse buildings. To maximize sanitation and productivity, rural housing bureaucrats and architects in the Ministry of Home Affairs recommended that farmers construct a house divided into rooms, main floor, and kitchen and then build a separate ancillary structure to serve as household barn, shed, and warehouse. This design also suggested that, in the future, the auxiliary building should be removed completely from individual farmhouses and constructed at the level of the village to serve as a common workplace like an industrial complex. This plan expected the new farmhouse to be used only as a farmer’s residence, which like urban homes were located away from the resident’s place of work. This planning was based on a prospect that agricultural production would and should be mechanized and collaborative, as in manufacturing production. However, farmers often complained that the

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\(^2\) “‘Tosihyŏng’ ŏro t’albakkum, Nongch’on ch’wirak kujo” [Rural village structure completely changes into urban style; Rural village structure], Chosŏn ilbo 20 December 1977; “Kŏnsŏlbu sunsi sô Park Taet’ongnyŏng chisi p’yŏjunhŭng nongch’on chut’aek yŏn’gu” [President Park orders to conduct research about standardized rural houses at inspection of Ministry of Construction], Tonga ilbo 22 January 1977; “Kŏnsŏlbu orhue kungmin chut’aek 25-manho kŏllip” [Ministry of Construction to build 250 thousand national houses for this year], Mael kyŏngje 4 January 1978; “Nongch’on sae p’un’sgokto (155): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (14), Munhwa chut’aek” [New trend in the countryside (155): Housing revolution (14), Cultural house], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 5 June 1978; “Nongch’on sae p’un’sgokto (168): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (27), Poillŏ sisŏl” [New trend in the countryside (168): Housing revolution (27), Boiler facilities], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 19 July 1978.
new urban-style farmhouse was not optimal for the patterns of life in the countryside, and the common warehouses under construction were too distant from each farmhouse. Some villagers and architects also came to the conclusion that the uniform urban-style houses could not meet the diverse needs of agricultural production and caused only residents’ discomfort.

The second section of this chapter will examine the so-called Village Structural Improvement Project (Ch’wirak Kujo Kaesŏn Saŏp). Launched in 1977 in conjunction with the Rural Housing Improvement Project, the Village Structural Improvement Project was guided by the dual aims to construct productive rural villages and to achieve the “urbanization of the whole country.” The initiative placed emphasis on three major components of community infrastructure: urban-style housing, common workplaces or facilities, and widened roads for machines and trucks. In fact, the project was not a new initiative at all – regional projects had already been conducted since 1970 under the name of the New Village Movement. However, the Village Structural Improvement Project presented a whole picture about how those diffuse constructions would be related to each other systematically in order to increase agricultural productivity.

As the third section will show, rice was the most important product cultivated in the village infrastructure under construction. In particular, T’ongil rice, a new variety first developed in late 1960s, was central to agricultural production in the 1970s. The T’ongil rice variety was designed to maximize the yield of grains. Techno-bureaucrats expected farmers to produce the new high-yield rice on new village farms with agro-machines. In this sense, the new village was thought to be a place to realize the ideal of industrial mass-production in agriculture. The term “T’ongil” referred to national unification in the context of global Cold War confrontation,

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however, T’ongil rice was actually unifying the whole countryside along with the new houses and new villages, which were under transformation. The government insistently persuaded farmers to cultivate only T’ongil variety on their rice paddies, sometimes depriving the agricultural producers of their right to choose seeds, so as to move towards the single ideal of massive production of rice or so-called “green revolution.”

Living and Working for the Countryside

During the late 1970s, new houses in the countryside, called “urban style houses (Tosihyǒng chut’aek)” or “cultural houses (Munhwa chut’aek),”4 began to represent a deliberate blurring of the designs used for housing in the city and the countryside, serving as a form of spatial unification. Newspapers described the virtue of the new house comparatively such as “a rural cultural house, just like that of the city”5 or “a cultural house not inferior to an urban one.”6 One article went even further, suggesting “the complete transformation into urban style (Tosihyǒng ūro t’albaggum).”7 Sometimes, this rhetorical syntax was presented with visual images. In 1979, a government publication on the Rural Housing Improvement Project inserted the typical before

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4 “‘Tosihyǒng’ ūro t’albakkum, Nongch’on ch’wirak kujo” [Rural village structure completely changes into urban style; Rural village structure], Chosin ilbo 20 December 1977; “Kŏnsŏlbu sunsi sŏ Park Taet’ongnyŏng chisi p’yŏjunhyǒng nongch’on chut’aek yŏn’gu” [President Park orders to conduct research about standardized rural houses at inspection of Ministry of Construction], Tonga ilbo 22 January 1977; “Kŏnsŏlbu orhae kungmin chut’aek 25-manho kŏllip” [Ministry of Construction to build 250 thousand national houses for this year], Maeil kyŏngje 4 January 1978; “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (155): Chugŏ pyŏnhŏık (14), Munhwa chut’aek” [New trend in the countryside (155): Housing revolution (14), Cultural house], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 5 June 1978; “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (168): Chugŏ pyŏnhŏık (27), Poillŏ sisŏl” [New trend in the countryside (168): Housing revolution (27), Boiler facilities], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 19 July 1978.
5 “‘Tosihyǒng’ ūro t’albakkum, Nongch’on ch’wirak kujo” [Rural village structure completely changes into urban style; Rural village structure], Chosin ilbo 20 December 1977.
7 “‘Tosihyǒng’ ūro t’albakkum, Nongch’on ch’wirak kujo” [Rural village structure completely changes into urban style; Rural village structure], Chosin ilbo 20 December 1977.
and after photos to show the dramatic change of rural housing conditions. (Picture 5.1) Next to the pictures, readers found a title saying “Improvement into Cultural Houses without a Gap between the City and the Countryside.”

There was no clear definition as to what constituted the urban-style cultural house for the countryside. The term, however, frequently appeared with modifiers like “sanitary” or “convenient.” To understand the content of the representationally homogenized space, it is thus necessary to examine architectural designs that the blueprints emphasized to secure hygienic and comfortable living conditions in the new rural houses.

The Department of Rural Housing Improvement, an office under the umbrella of the Ministry of Home Affairs, asserted that rural houses were unsanitary mainly because living spaces were integrated with working spaces. According to their publication, “In a traditional rural house, a yard for working was located at the centre, and sections for living and working were put in disorder and mixed up. Therefore, noise, dust, and foul smells disturb the residential environment.” Under the premise that this adulterated space was the main reason for rural

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8 Naemubu chibang haengjöngguk nongch'on chut'aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok üi taeyöksa: Nongch'on chut'aeksan'gu [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 49)
9 “Könsölbu sunsi só Park Taet’ongnyŏng chisi p’yojunhyŏng nongch’on chut’aek yŏn’gu” [President Park orders to conduct research about standardized rural houses at inspection of Ministry of Construction], Tonga ilbo 22 January 1977; “Könsölbu orhae kungmin chut’aek 25-manho köllip” [Ministry of Construction to build 250 thousand national houses for this year], Maeil kyŏngje 4 January 1978.
uncleanliness, the solution was simple and clear – “division.”12 As a part of explaining the orientation of the government’s housing policy, officials clarified that “rural housing be based on the principle of separating the production-focused working section from the residential section.”13

The rural housing bureaucrats and architects thought that a clear separation between living and working spaces would bring farmers a more convenient lifestyle; they regarded this type of spatial arrangement to be efficient in terms of the convergence and management of working places.14 The widely distributed blueprints and bird’s eye views that the techno-bureaucrats offered reflected this assumption. These blueprints standardized a main building consisting of only rooms, a main floor, and kitchen and another completely detached building for use as a barn, or for housing livestock.15 Going even further, the government’s publications suggested that ideally the separated working places of individual farm houses should ultimately be situated at a district of village to facilitate cooperative production, stating that “Farming in the future will be conducted by means of machines and cooperation at a large scale. At that time, it is expected that the sections for residence and production will be completely separated and rearranged into residential complexes and production districts. In this situation, people will lead

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their lives (Saenghwal) in their house, and work together in a working zone. Rural houses will have similar functions to urban houses in the end.\textsuperscript{16}

The urban-style cultural house, at least from the perspective of the government authorities heading the rural housing project, meant a new rural house where the site for working was clearly differentiated from the indoor space for living. Images in Picture 5.2 illustrates the integrated environment in earlier housing designs, which existed in the Provinces of Chŏlla, Kyŏngsang, and Ch’ungch’ŏng before the New Village Movement of the 1970s. When evaluated from the standard of an urban-style cultural house, the problem of the traditional house was evident. Warehouses, cattle sheds or pigsties were attached to the rooms and kitchens in the case of figures 1, 2, and 4. The vegetable garden, pantry, and other places for firewood or compost were in disarray in different corners of house as in the case of figures 2 and 3. The floor plans of the standardized house in the 1970s displayed the model that these representationally \textquotedblleft ugly and unsanitary\textquotedblright\textsuperscript{17} rural houses were to emulate in their reconstruction process. Built under guidance of local government officials, the new house consisted of two independent buildings; a main building for rooms, kitchen, and floor; and a completely detached adjacent building of other purposes than ‘living (Saenghwal),’ as seen in Picture 5.3 and Picture 5.4.

\textsuperscript{16} Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi tae’yŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing], Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 550)

\textsuperscript{17} “Nongch’ón sae p’ungsokto (166): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (25), Pusoksa” [New trend in the countryside (166): Housing revolution (25), Auxiliary buildings], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 17 July 1978.
<Picture 5.1> “Improvement into Cultural Houses without a Gap between the City and the Countryside”

Image from Naemubu chibang haengjôngguk nongch’on chut’ae olderyangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok üi taeyôksa: Nongch’on chut’ae olda [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 49)
<Picture 5.2> Examples of the Layout and Floor Planning in Rural Houses before the Rural Housing Improvement in the 1970s

(#1) A farmhouse in Kwangju, Choll’a Province (1920s, estimated)

(#2) A farmhouse near Taej’on, Ch’ungch’ŏng Province (1920s, estimated)
(3) A farmhouse in Andong, Kyŏngsang Province (1920s, estimated)

(4) Two farmhouses in Koesan, Ch'ungch'ŏng Province (after 1945)

<Picture 5.3> A Bird’s Eye View of a Standardized Farmhouse

(#1) A bird’s eye view of 15 p’yŏng (49.6 m²) C-type farmhouse

(#2) A bird’s eye view of 18 p’yŏng (59.5 m²) B-type farmhouse

However, in the actual construction of the new houses, the officials did not consider the design of working spaces as important as the main residence. In fact, local housing officials working for construction sites often regarded making an auxiliary building (*Pusoksa*) as a secondary and troublesome matter following the completion of the main house.18 Sometimes the

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18 “Santūthan munhwa chut’ae̊k ūl chi’un nongga esŏnŭn hŏtkan, oeyangkan tung pusoksa rŭl ᄆトーtke chiŏya hanŭnya ka munjeda” [The problem is how to build auxiliary buildings such as barns and cattle sheds after constructing a new culture farm houses], *Kyŏnghyang sinmun* 17 July 1978; “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (166): Chuŏ pyŏnhyŏk (25), Pusoksa” [New trend in the countryside (166): Housing revolution (25), Auxiliary buildings], *Kyŏnghyang sinmun* 17 July 1978.
ancillary workplace was hidden in the back of the main house building as in Picture 5.5.19 It was even the case that new houses in some model villages had no building for warehouses or barns due to the local government’s administrative guidance that those extra structures would “injure the residential environment.”20 However, farmers always needed an annex where they could keep agricultural implements, store grain, and breed livestock.21 Some villages had a common warehouse or cattle shed, but this was not always a useful solution. In Myŏngju County, villages constructed a common warehouse in 1971, however, the building was not well maintained making the entire village where the structure was constructed look shabby.22 Kim Man-sik in Yŏch’ŏn County complained that a new village warehouse made his work much more inconvenient and cumbersome because his house was 2 km distant from the common warehouse; the daily routine work like putting in and taking out farm implements in the warehouse began to make him increasingly annoyed.23 Ultimately, most farmers left the common facilities unused.24

19 Chang Po-ung, a geographer, stated that he observed this type of annex in Changsŏng County, which was hidden not to be seen from the highway. Chang Po-ung. 1979. “Nongch’on chut’ae’k kaeryang saŏp esŏ p’asaengdoen munje wa kŭ taech’aek: Chŏnnam chibang ŭi chŏnt’ong nongch’on chut’ae’k kwa kaeryang nongch’on chut’ae’k ŭi pigyo yŏn’gu” [A Study on Some Problems Derived from Improvement Work of Rural Houses and Their Solutions: A Comparative Study on the Traditional Rural Houses and New Rural Houses in South Chŏlla Province]. Chirihak 14 (1): 41-51 [Geography]. Seoul: Taehan chirihakhoe [The Korean Geographical Society]. (p. 48)
21 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (163): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (22), P’yŏjun sŏlge” [New trend in the countryside (163): Housing revolution (22), Standardized blueprints], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 8 July 1978.
The new urban-style house was not quite suitable for the lifestyle of farmers. Farmers expressed their dissatisfaction with the new houses through direct and outspoken voices. Sim Kyu-man in Asan County stated, “I built a large basement cellar to store farm products and fruits. Rural houses are now identical to urban houses in terms of appearance, but the structure of the houses should be constructed in different ways because their life structures (Saenghwal kujo) are
different from each other." Villagers in Sŏsan County shared this skepticism, saying, “When we look at the completed new house, it’s nice. However, there is something inconvenient for rural housekeeping.” Sŏ Chŏng-hyu in Yŏch’ŏn County built a kitchen a little larger than that in the blueprints and made a traditional furnace to make fire with natural fuel produced from nearby forests and fields, stressing, “In the rural areas, to manage a kitchen is different [from that in the city].” Many farmers complained that the kitchen in particular was too small in their new homes, and it was common for residents to alter the layout of their houses to better suit their mode of living in the rural areas.

Designs for the new cultural house also did not take into account the domestic culture that had long existed among rural residents. In late 1970s, Chang Po-ung, a geographer, interviewed an old villager in Kurye County regarding the rural housing improvement. The interviewee stated to Chang that, after the improvement of house, he usually went out during the daytime and came back home only for eating and sleeping in order to avoid awkward silence with his son’s wife (myŏnŭri). The new house seemed to have not been a comfortable home to him any longer. According to Chang’s explanation, the central indoor floor of the new urban-style house was designed to connect and open up to all rooms. While, from a design perspective, there may have been some utility to this, the central indoor floor became an uncomfortable space.

26 “Nongch’ŏn sae p’ungsokto (163): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (22), P’yŏjuan sŏlgye” [New trend in the countryside (163): Housing revolution (22), Standardized blueprints], Kyŏngyang sinmun 8 July 1978.
27 “Nongch’ŏn sae p’ungsokto (163): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (22), P’yŏjuan sŏlgye” [New trend in the countryside (163): Housing revolution (22), Standardized blueprints], Kyŏngyang sinmun 8 July 1978.
28 “Nongch’ŏn sae p’ungsokto (163): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (22), P’yŏjuan sŏlgye” [New trend in the countryside (163): Housing revolution (22), Standardized blueprints], Kyŏngyang sinmun 8 July 1978.
especially for those with larger families that were accustomed to a more conservative rural family culture; in 1977, it was reported that 30.6% of farm households consisted of a three-generation family. Chang assumed that if the old villager (interviewee) sat on the floor from which he was visible in all the rooms, particularly in summer, both he and his son’s wife would feel uncomfortable whenever they encountered each other in silence.

Considering the problems of the new rural houses, many began to feel skeptical about whether the so called urban-style rural house was an appropriate housing type for agricultural industry and living. A newspaper editorial wrote, “It is necessary to rethink thoroughly whether the design of houses under construction or already built are suitable as a rural house. Rural houses are not only homes for living, but also workplaces themselves.”30 This editorial illuminated the characteristics of farm work that did not clearly distinguish the sphere of living (Saenghwal) from the space of working. From a shared understanding about such an ambiguous boundary, some housing experts criticized the uniformed structure of rural houses that simply copied urban houses imposing an artificial division on rural lifestyle.31 According to their assertion, various forms of farming such as rice farming, the raising of livestock, and fruit production needed different types of farm houses. The standardized urban-style houses could not meet the diverse needs of the countryside efficiently.32

For those who were critical about the urban-style houses in the countryside, the rural village of standardized houses was far from urbane sophistication. Song T’ae-gyu, a farmer in

31 “Nongch’on chut’ae kanyeung orhae 8-man yŏ ch’ae” [Rural Housing Improvement Project to construct 80 thousand houses this year], Kyŏngyang sinmun 22 January 1979.
32 “Nongch’on chut’ae kanyeung orhae 8-man yŏ ch’ae” [Rural Housing Improvement Project to construct 80 thousand houses this year], Kyŏngyang sinmun 22 January 1979.
Wanju County said, “Even if it was convenient to build a standardized house, the completed houses gave us a feeling as if we were living in a uniform village constructed for a company’s dormitory.” In a more strident tone, Kim Chung-ŏp, an architect, called them an “eyesore.” For Kim, the traditional workplaces in a rural house were useful and beautiful spaces for multiple purposes; the inner yard was a place not only for production, but also for family ceremonies such as coming-of-age, marriage, funeral, and ancestor worship; barns and sheds were necessary sites for rural livelihood.

However, like so many other features of the New Village Movement, the urban was considered the modern norm – and rural spaces were judged by these urban criteria. “The urbanization of rural villages should not be our ideal,” an architect Kim Hwan wrote, in a critical article contributed to the Sŏul sinmun in 1978. Yet, to urbanize the countryside or to achieve such a spatial unification appeared to be the “ideal” to many who were living in the period of industrial hyper-growth in the 1970s. Even a student in a design competition had adapted such assumptions. In 1971, when the rural housing projects had yet to be initiated on a full scale, the Korea Institute of Registered Architects opened a design contest for desirable rural housing to “modernize” rural villages. The first place prize was given to a university student in the Department of Architectural Engineering. In the first prize winner’s design of a rural house and village, the traditionally dispersed buildings that made up different households were gathered into a collective residence of the “cultural house style.” Each farm household had an individual annex building to be used as a warehouse and livestock shed, and every three households shared

33 “Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (163): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (22), P’yŏojun sŏlgye” [New trend in the countryside (163): Housing revolution (22), Standardized blueprints], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 8 July 1978.
34 “Chip” [House], Tonga ilbo 28 October 1979.
35 “Nongga ŭi mihak” [Aesthetics of farm house], Sŏul sinmun 23 March 1978.
36 “Kŏnch’ŏksahyŏp kongmo isanghyŏng nongch’on chut’aeck” [Korea Institute of Registered Architects opens a design contest for ideal rural village], Tonga ilbo 16 July 1971.
an additional common shed to raise livestock and a common storehouse to keep farm implements. In addition to these common workshops, the design included a school, market, and popular urban-style supermarket into the rural village. Even though the university student’s design was not identical to that of the late 1970s government project for rural housing, both projects maintained the basic approach to the division and collection of space in the name of ‘rural modernization.’

Re-designing the Village

In preparation for the urbanization of rural housing, the Ministry of Home Affairs had even more comprehensive plans for reforming village structures. This was little wonder when it is considered that even undergraduate architecture students’ drawings in the aforementioned contest reflected and planned such a comprehensive layout. Images at the time display diagrammatically how the urbanization of individual houses could be connected and shifted to ideal designs of more productive farm villages. (Picture 5.6) For government authorities, the ultimate dream village consisted of two completely independent complexes; one for housing and the other for production-related activities. The transition to this new model was broken into three stages: first, traditional rural houses, where places for living and working were integrated, were to be transitioned to the current model where the two functions were separated inside a house; second, individual houses and ancillary structures were to be collectivized and shared residences

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37 As for the government’s early interest on the relationship between housing improvement and village reconstruction in the rural areas, refer to the following publication. Naemubu [Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1971. Nongch’on ch’wirak kujo kaeson kwa chut’aeik kaeryang pungan yin’gu [A Study on the Plans for Rural Community Relocation and Housing Improvement]. Seoul: Naemubu.

38 Naemubu chibang haengjöngguk nongch’on chut’aeik kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok üu taevoka: Nongch’on chut’akeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 550)
and workplaces were to be constructed; finally, a complex for living and another complex for working were to be completely separated from each other. This three-stage plan operated under the assumption that to separate spatially work from living and to construct such independent complexes was necessary and advantageous for large scaled mechanization and cooperative farming. This plan also supposed that the new houses should have similar functions to urban houses in the agricultural complex village where mechanized and collective production would be conducted like in urban industries.

<Picture 5.6> Three Stages for the “Ideal” Layout of a Residence and Workplace in Rural Villages

Such an ‘ideal’ village plan was often expressed through the so-called Village Structural Improvement Project (Ch’wirak Kujo Kaesŏn Saŏp). The government initiated this

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40 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’ón chut’ae’k kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ǔi taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 550)
project in 1977 in parallel with the Rural Housing Improvement Project.\footnote{Naemubu chibang haengjōngguk nongch'on chut'aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch'on chut'aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing], Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 232 and p. 235)} The project briefing clarified that, “even if only one house is reconstructed, its location and access roads should be decided in the direction for the improvement of the village structure.”\footnote{Naemubu chibang haengjōngguk nongch'on chut'aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch'on chut'aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing], Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 393)} In principle, the village plan was a precondition to the improvement of individual houses.\footnote{Naemubu chibang haengjōngguk nongch'on chut'aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyŏksa: Nongch'on chut'aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing], Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 393)} It was also publically stated that the ideas of the Village Structural Improvement Project borrowed the conception of urban planning with the aim to make individual houses function well for the community.\footnote{“Sasŏl: ‘Ch’wirak kaesŏn’ ŭi sŏnhu wan’gup” [Editorial: Order and speed of ‘community relocation’], Kyŏngyang sinmun 14 April 1977; “Sasŏl: Maŭl kujo ŭi kaesŏn” [Editorial: Improvement of village structure], Chungang ilbo 14 April 1977.} Resonating with the government’s briefing, a newspaper editorial asserted, “In the future, the Village Structural Improvement Project will have to be conducted in the direction for achieving the balanced development of the national land, the equalization of living standard, and furthermore the urbanization of the whole country.”\footnote{“Sasŏl: Maŭl kujo ŭi kaesŏn” [Editorial: Improvement of village structure], Chungang ilbo 14 April 1977.}

The plan of the Village Structural Improvement Project was full of recommendations related to agricultural production. Preparing for the project, the Ministry of Home Affairs and local government offices gathered information on a subject village relating to its production levels and potential for growth, the speed of income increase, the innovation of agricultural technology and cooperative methods, the increase and decrease of population, and the conditions...
of distribution system.\(^4\) The local and central governments did not explain in detail how they would analyze and apply such comprehensive information. However, it was indicated that three parts of village reconstruction would be the main contents of the Village Structural Improvement Project: the improvement of rural housing, establishment of common facilities, and expansion of street networks.\(^4\) The project instructed farmers to secure new housing sites of over 100 P’yŏng (330.6 m\(^2\)) or sometimes 150 P’yŏng (495.9 m\(^2\)) per house, further increasing farmers’ financial burdens.\(^4\) As for the common facilities, the project usually designed a village hall, a sales shop, a square, and a children’s playground at the centre of the village, while locating common warehouses and collective workplaces throughout the adjacent farmland. Common cattle sheds, pigpens, and compost grounds were placed behind the village.\(^4\) (Picture 5.7) The project also

\(^{46}\) Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’ae k’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ūi tae’yŏksa: Nongch’on chut’ae k’aeks [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 393)

planned to expand the width of main roads to 8 m, and that of branch roads (farm roads) to 4-5 m so that agro-machines and trucks could pass through conveniently.\(^{50}\)

\[\text{Chapter 5} \]

\(<\text{Picture 5.7}>\) Standardized Village Planning

\(^{50}\) Naemubu chibang haengjönggsuk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok ŭi taeyoks[The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 396-397); “Sasŏl: ‘Ch’wirak kaesŏn’ ŭi sŏnu wan’gŭp” [Editorial: Order and speed of ‘community relocation’], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 14 April 1977.
(2) Plan for 150 households

The government categorized target villages into three types. Type A was a village where all the houses had to be relocated and rebuilt on different housing sites due to reasons such as the introduction of an industrial complex or the construction of a dam. In type B villages, about one third to half of deteriorated houses had to be reconstructed or relocated collectively to a different housing site. Type C villages were regarded as relatively well structured, requiring only five to six houses be improved. 2,747 rural villages in total were selected for the Village Structural Improvement Project in the 1970s. Most of these (2,094 villages) were grouped as Type B villages, whereas Type A accounted for 562 villages and Type C was only 91. The high rate at which rural communities were categorized as Type B villages speaks to the ambitions of the project to alter the village structure across the country.

The layout of the ideal village was always displayed through planned drawings. Selected villages for the project had a sign post in front of the village, saying “Village Structural Improvement (Ch’wirak kujo kaesŏn)” as seen in Picture 5.8. Generally, the signs were directed to passersby so that the standing village itself worked naturally as a model village propagating the government’s rural policies. Local housing officials exhibited village plan drawings as well, which gave summary of information about the village and its various

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54 Naemubu chibang haengijŏngguk nongch’on chut’ae k’aryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. Minjok iŭ taeyŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 189-190)
construction projects. The last illustration in Picture 5.9 was a plan drawing for the Village Structural Improvement Project at Sareaul village in Ch’unsŏng County. It provided two-tiered information. First, it outlined the present status of the village such as numbers of households (farming households and non-farming households), population (men and women), cultivating area (fields and rice paddies), and averaged income and cultivating area per household. Second, it provided a brief summary on the amount of expenses and the villagers’ share in the total expenses, along with the details for the construction of each facility. Yet, the plan drawing allocated most of its space to display before and after pictures of the village. The pictures contained mostly intuitive information about the coming change to the village.

In fact, much of the Village Structural Improvement Project was not completely new. Constructing village roads, expanding farm roads, and building public facilities such as village halls, store houses, workshops, and stalls had been carried out since 1970 under the same slogan of the New Village Movement. Nearly all of the major parts of the project overlapped with the Rural Housing Improvement Project. In terms of objective, however, the Village Structural Improvement Project presented a more comprehensive and structured spatial image of the ideal rural village, which had been sporadically expressed in different sites of the New Village construction (Saemaul kŏnsŏl).

The rural housing works focused mainly on how to urbanize traditional rural houses; the construction of common facilities emphasized the efficiency of cooperative production; and

the expansion of roads had been understood as an important work project to enable the use of trucks and large agro-machines, respectively.\footnote{Naemubu [Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1980. 
*Saemaül Undong 10-yōnsa [A 10 Year History of the New Village Movement]*. Seoul: Naemubu. (pp. 343-344)} Yet, the whole layout of the town prepared in the Village Structural Improvement Project demonstrated how each section of the works were interconnected with each other to lead to the urbanized lifestyle and industrialized farming methods. In the comprehensive vision of the Village Structural Improvement Project, the urban-style farm house was considered a place where, like urban workers’ retreat from the factory, farmers could rest before and after the commute between the fields and village workshops. Similarly, the common workplaces were intended to serve as spaces where they could process and store harvest and keep implements. Finally, the expanded village roads were designed for trucks, power tillers, and tractors to pass through easily from the rice paddies into the village.\footnote{“Kigyehwa wihae nongch’on kaejo” [Reconstruction of rural villages for mechanization], *Han’guk ilbo* 17 January 1978; “Sasŏl: Ma’il kujo ū kaesŏn” [Editorial: Improvement of village structure], *Chungang ilbo* 14 April 1977; Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs]. 1979. *Minjok ū tae yöksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]*. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 361)}

In this sense, the comprehensive design of new homes and new villages was part of a spatial solution for agricultural productivity.\footnote{From the perspective of production, rice paddy was also an important constituent in this comprehensive spatial reconfiguration. The redesign of rice paddy was understood as a preceding condition for the innovated farming methods before anything else. The plan to redesign rice paddies was conducted from 1964 to the 1970s in a full scale under the name of the Land Rearrangement Project (*Kyŏngji chŏngri saŭp*). According to a government’s document on the 1972 Land Rearrangement Plan, the main purposes of the project were: first, to make a part of rice paddy bordered a roadway so that farmers could convey agricultural machines and products without passing via another’s land; second, to change the size, shape, and structure of fields for more efficient use of agri-machine; third, to reconstruct irrigation and drainage system in a way to use machines more conveniently; finally, to let farmers exchange lands for developed and collective farming methods in the future. To sum up, the key point of the Land Rearrangement Project was to reshape and exchange rice paddies for machines to work in more productive ways. (Nongnimbu [Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry]. 1972. “Nongji chŏngni kyehoek: 1972.10” [Land Rearrangement Plan, October 1972]. Seoul: Nongnimbu)}
<Picture 5.8> The Sign Posts of Village Structural Improvement

CHAPTER 5

<Picture 5.9> Drawings for the Planned Village Structural Improvement Project

Unification Rice

Rooted in the modernization theory that was overwhelming much economic planning in the 1970s, the New Village Movement was a sort of phased comprehensive development plan aiming for more production and income. Many propaganda documents on the Rural New Village Movement explicated that the ultimate purpose of the movement was to boost rural income by increasing agricultural productivity. In integrated explanations among various projects of the New Village Movement, a schematized flowchart was often found with the following diagram: “the reformation of rural infrastructure ➞ the spiritual enlightenment of the farmers ➞ increased production and rural income-boost.”60 This diagram explained that so-called “spiritual enlightenment” would link construction projects in the countryside to the amplification of rural production. However, the farmers’ daily experiences had different explanations about the connection. Rather than through such a vague and superficial propaganda rhetoric, the relationship between the reconstructed living spaces and the changes of farmers’ production could be observed in the very material and concrete dynamics that people made in and outside of the new space.

The course of reconfiguring rural space was indeed connected to the crucial problems of agricultural production in the end. Previous chapters on the roof, house, and interior spaces showed how the process of reconstructing living spaces in the countryside supported rapidly growing manufacturing by expanding domestic market and rural consumption in the 1970s. At the same time, however, the interconnected design of houses and villages represented a rural community as an independent production unit to meet then changing industrial demand on

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agricultural production.\textsuperscript{61} Throughout the 1970s, the countryside experienced an accelerated rural exodus even in the midst of a rural housing boom. At the same time, the city demanded more and cheaper provisions for the constant inflow of workers mainly to intensify price competitiveness in the global export market. At this juncture, the design of urbanized living spaces and working places reflected an optimal spatial structure, where farmers could produce the demanded larger-quantity and lower-priced grains more efficiently through mechanized and collaborative production like in the system of manufacturing complexes in the city.

Needless to say, rice was central to the issues of mass-production in these ideal new villages. Rice was the staple grain and most farmers in South Korea concentrated on rice production. Yet, the shortage of rice in the 1950s continued until the 1960s. The increase of rice production was thus considered to be an urgent and important task, especially in the 1970s when the military coup regime claimed political legitimacy, and industrial capital sought to continue high speed growth on the basis of low wages. The long-lasting aspiration for self-sufficiency became possible with the introduction of a new rice variety, named T’ongil rice\textsuperscript{62} in the late 1970s – just at the time when the roofing and electrification was almost completed and farmers began to construct urban style houses with restructuring village layout for the efficiency of production. The T’ongil variety was developed by a Korean plant breeding scientist, Dr. Heu Mun Hue (허문회), first in the late 1960s. T’ongil rice was a hybrid, bred from Japonica and

\textsuperscript{61} “Sasŏl: ‘Ch’wirak kaesŏn’ ūi sŏnhu wan’gup” [Editorial: Order and speed of ‘community relocation’], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 14 April 1977.
Indica types. The most important characteristic of T’ongil rice lay in its high-yield capability, which precisely satisfied the industrial demand for the mass-production of cheaper rice.

From the beginning when the first model farms for T’ongil rice variety were established in 1970, the techno-bureaucrats supposed that farmers should produce the T’ongil rice efficiently on the collective farms of new villages with the assistance of cutting-edge agro-machines and new technological knowledge. In this sense, the farmers’ new village was a concrete place to realize the dream of industrial mass-productivity in agriculture as well as a site to represent a spatial unification between the city and the countryside. In 1977 and 1978, the single variety of T’ongil rice occupied over 70% of the total national yield of rice, growing on the paddies beside the new house and village under construction.

T’ongil rice was also the product of international Cold War politics. The strain was systematically supported by the Park regime and international (and domestic) capital. Dr. Heu developed the T’ongil variety with the support of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines in the late 1960s. The IRRI was established by the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations in 1960. The rural development work of the foundations was aimed at preventing

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65 Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwŏn [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. 1989. Han’guk nongjŏng sasimnyŏnsa [40 Years of Agricultural Policies in Korea]. Vol. 1. Seoul: Han’guk nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’guwŏn. (p. 431)

66 Nongmin sinmun p’yŏnjipkuk [Editorial Bureau of Farmers Newspaper]. 2005. Ssal ŭl malhanda [Rice is Life]. Seoul: Nongmin sinmunsa. (pp. 149-152)

“developing countries [from] falling into the Communist camp.”68 The developed T’ongil rice in the IRRI was air-transported into Korea69 and was strongly supported again by the financial and administrative sponsorships of the South Korean government and domestic industrial capital.70 In 1999, Dr. Heu stated that “T’ongil rice did back up the New Village Movement and thereby provided a stable basis for the whole process of industrial development.”71

Originally and literally, the term of T’ongil referred to the unification of North and South Koreas in the context of sharp Cold War confrontations.72 However, T’ongil indeed seemed to mean the unification of the whole countryside both in terms of time and space, similar to the role of new rural houses that represented the homogenization of the countryside and the city. The cultivation of T’ongil rice gradually unified paddy fields all over the country under a single spatio-temporal framework, depriving farmers of their own autonomous schedule of cultivation and choice of seeds, for the goal of massive production of rice. In the early stages, the government established 550 model farms for the new variety all over the country and controlled them systematically.73 The T’ongil rice farms looked like a single huge laboratory. As the

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72 Kim In-hwan. 1978. *Han’guk ui Noksae Kayoungmyoung: Pyo sipumjong ui kaebal kwa pogu* [The Green Revolution in Korea: Development and Dissemination of New Rice Varieties]. Suwon: Nongch’on chinhungch’ong [Rural Development Administration]. (pp. 84-85)
T’ongil rice began to spread more widely beyond the model farms, the central government dispatched techno-officials densely to each village for more efficient management. The officials had weekly cultivation calendars indicating when to prepare rice seed plots, transplant rice, use insecticide, weed the field, and harvest rice.74 Farmers had to follow such a detailed schedule because T’ongil rice was a new variety developed in laboratories and, of course, they did not have the experience of cultivating it. The laboratory-born seeds began to unify all the spaces of agricultural production in the countryside under the single schedule of cultivation, changing within just a couple of years the traditional agri-calendar that had lasted at least for hundreds of years.75 Such a spatio-temporal unification was a very outspoken expression of the capitalist desire in the period of rapidly growing industrialization.

The infrastructures for the introduction and spread of the new variety T’ongil were almost identical to the personal and technological systems that were used for the construction of farmers’ roof, electricity, house, and village.76 Like the government organizations for the rural housing project, a top-down techno-administrative network was established for the new rice variety all over the countryside. The government needed to employ thousands of new technology

officials to work for the newly established rural guiding offices.\textsuperscript{77} The number of these offices under the Rural Development Administration (\textit{Nongch’\’on \textit{Chinh\’ungch’\’ong}}) reached 1,473 in total in 1975, which could cover every town (\textit{Úp}) and township (\textit{Myôn}) in the countryside at the time.\textsuperscript{78} The central techno-bureaucrats also embarked on lecture tours to educate farmers about the superiority, genetic characteristics, and cultivation techniques of T’ongil rice from early 1970.\textsuperscript{79} As the new rural houses did, model farms for T’ongil rice were established especially along the highway to display the cultivation process of the new variety, often holding evaluation meetings with neighboring farmers at every stage of rice cultivation.\textsuperscript{80} Like the standardized blueprints for a new farmhouse, millions of manuals and pamphlets for T’ongil rice were published and spread free of charge.\textsuperscript{81} Most of all, as electricity came into farmers’ home, television and radio became the most effective tool for spreading various informations about the T’ongil variety. Between 1970 and 1977, approximately 9,000 programs about technology for the increase of agricultural production were broadcast through television and radio, many of which were related to T’ongil rice.\textsuperscript{82} On average, farmers were exposed to such broadcast

\textsuperscript{77} Han’guk nongch’\’on ky\’ongje y\’\'on’\’guw\’\’on [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. 1989. \textit{Han’guk nongj\’\’on sasimny\’\’onsa [40 Years of Agricultural Policies in Korea]}. Vol. 2. Seoul: Han’guk nongch’\’on ky\’ongje y\’\'on’\’guw\’\’on. (p. 436)

\textsuperscript{78} Han’guk nongj\’\’op kisulsa palgan wiw\’\’onhoe [Compilation Committee for A History of Agricultural Techniques in Korea]. 1983. \textit{Han’guk nongj\’\’op kisulsa [A History of Agricultural Techniques in Korea]}. Seoul: Han’guk nongj\’\’op kisulsa palgan wiw\’\’onhoe. (p. 788); Han’guk nongch’\’on ky\’ongje y\’\'on’\’guw\’\’on [Korea Rural Economic Institute]. 1989. \textit{Han’guk nongj\’\’ong sasimny\’\’onsa [40 Years of Agricultural Policies in Korea]}. Vol. 2. Seoul: Han’guk nongch’\’on ky\’ongje y\’\'on’\’guw\’\’on. (p. 436)

\textsuperscript{79} Kim In-hwan. 1978. \textit{Han’guk i\’\’i Noksaeck Hy\’\’ongmy\’\’ong: Py\’\’o sinp’\’umjong i\’\’i kaebal kwa pog\’\’ap [The Green Revolution in Korea: Development and Dissemination of New Rice Varieties]}. Suw\’\’on: Nongch’\’on chinh\’ungch’\’ong [Rural Development Administration]. (pp. 71-72)

\textsuperscript{80} Kim In-hwan. 1978. \textit{Han’guk i\’\’i Noksaeck Hy\’\’ongmy\’\’ong: Py\’\’o sinp’\’umjong i\’\’i kaebal kwa pog\’\’ap [The Green Revolution in Korea: Development and Dissemination of New Rice Varieties]}. Suw\’\’on: Nongch’\’on chinh\’ungch’\’ong [Rural Development Administration]. (p. 71)

\textsuperscript{81} Kim In-hwan. 1978. \textit{Han’guk i\’\’i Noksaeck Hy\’\’ongmy\’\’ong: Py\’\’o sinp’\’umjong i\’\’i kaebal kwa pog\’\’ap [The Green Revolution in Korea: Development and Dissemination of New Rice Varieties]}. Suw\’\’on: Nongch’\’on chinh\’ungch’\’ong [Rural Development Administration]. (p. 184)

\textsuperscript{82} Kim In-hwan. 1978. \textit{Han’guk i\’\’i Noksaeck Hy\’\’ongmy\’\’ong: Py\’\’o sinp’\’umjong i\’\’i kaebal kwa pog\’\’ap [The Green Revolution in Korea: Development and Dissemination of New Rice Varieties]}. Suw\’\’on: Nongch’\’on chinh\’ungch’\’ong [Rural Development Administration]. (pp. 184-186)
programs three times a day during the period. Even before buying a television or radio, farmers could not escape these targeted instructions. Low-ranking techno-officials visited each village in person and explained the virtues of the new rice variety, often using electric amplifiers.83

The propagation of T’ongil rice also accompanied administrative compulsion and pecuniary incentives, much like those used in the roofing and housing projects. The governmental officials persistently persuaded rice producers to choose the T’ongil variety. Farmers were very careful when they chose new varieties, giving priority to the stability of the yield and their experience of working with the strain.84 Therefore, it was ‘difficult and stressful work’ for the low-ranking officials to visit each farmhouse and recommend the T’ongil variety to the farmers.85 It was often stated in news articles that local officials pulled up traditional rice plants and forced farmers to replant T’ongil variety instead.86 There was not only administrative compulsion, but also financial advantages to induce farmers to grow T’ongil rice. The government supplied fertilizers and agrichemicals to support the new variety.87 When the government purchased the autumnal harvest grains, T’ongil rice was given preferential treatment

84 Nongch’on chinhüngch’ong nongöp kyöngyöng yön’guso [Agriculture Business Institute in the Rural Development Administration]. 1967.12. Nongga úi pyö p’umjong sönt’aeck e kwanhan yön’gu [A Study on the Farm Households’ Selection of Rice Variety]. Suwôn: Nongch’on chinhüngch’ong nongöp kyöngyöng yön’guso. (pp. 5-6)
in terms of pricing and grading. To promote the productional competition between T’ongil cultivators, the government also spent much prize money to individual farmers and cooperative farms.

The increased yield of rice led to reportedly “self-sufficiency” in staple grains in the late 1970s. This status of rice production was especially called the “green revolution” and extensively celebrated. For a couple of years, many reports quoted statistical data indicating that the average nominal income of farm household outstripped that of urban working household due to the high-yield variety. At this juncture, the unification rice began to produce a myth that it finally annihilated the existing gap between the countryside and the city, although the quoted data was arguable in the sense that they simply ignored important factors such as the number of family members, the difference of real estate values, and the amount of household debts. At least, it seemed that the Cold War rice had fulfilled in theory the task of mass-production and spatial unification given during the period of hyper-industrialization.

Conclusion: The Green Revolution in the 1970s

The term “green revolution” acquired significance only when drastically increased agricultural production could be linked to a direct political message. The discourse of ‘self-sufficiency’ of rice gave such a political message to the achievement of production. Through the discourse of self-sufficiency, the government was able to demonstrate a form of commodities-based self-confidence, deciding to lend 70,000 tons of rice to Indonesia\(^94\) and making an ‘insulting’ Cold War gesture to North Korea with a suggestion of rice aid in 1977.\(^95\)

The status of self-sufficiency of rice in the late 1970s did not only rely on the augmentation of production, but it was possible through the regulation of rice consumption in the rice market. To put it differently, the green revolution was completed by a combination of increased production and decreased consumption. An effective way of controlling rice consumption was to spread dietetic knowledge, that too much rice was not good for a balanced, healthy diet and that the compound consumption of barley and other grains was ideal for daily intake.\(^96\) The use of wheat flour, which flowed from the United States as a part of economic aid since the 1950s, was especially encouraged.\(^97\) Under this flood of nutritional knowledge, food processing industries grew rapidly, introducing Ramyŏn (instant noodles) and other flour-based

\(^94\) “7-man t’on kyumo tae Inni ssal taeyŏ hyŏpchŏng ch’egyŏl” [Seoul concludes an agreement to lend 70 thousand tons of rice with Indonesia], Tonga ilbo 30 November 1977.

\(^95\) “Park Taet’ongnyŏng yŏndu hoegyŏn, ‘Pukhan e singnyang wŏnjo yongŭi’” [President Park holds New Year press conference, “We’re ready to provide food aid to North Korea”], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 12 January 1977.


\(^97\) “Milgaru sobi 4-yŏn’gan 100% ch’ungga” [Consumption of wheat flour increases 100% for the last four years], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 4 June 1970; “Ssal kwa milgaru ŭi yŏngyang” [The nutritional qualities of rice and wheat], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 11 March 1963.
meals. This accompanied intensive control of daily life. School teachers inspected students’ lunch boxes, and taught the nutritional superiority of mixed barley diets. The state initiated the “No Rice Day” Campaign, and even regulated the ratio of rice and barley at restaurants with the means of strict administrative punishment. Yet, as the production of rice grew dramatically, the consumption of rice also soon increased as a consequence. The sufficient supply of rice even allowed people to brew rice Makkŏlli (raw rice wine), which was a monumental event because only wheat Makkŏlli had been permitted to be brewed and consumed until then.

The unification of the countryside led by T’ongil rice did not last long. Rice consumers began to eschew T’ongil rice for more palatable native varieties. This pattern of consumption can be viewed as a kind of resistance on the part of the consumer against the state’s standardization of taste. Some wealthy consumers in the city also preferred “clean rice”; T’ongil rice required much more synthesized fertilizers and agrichemicals than other rice varieties due to

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101 “Ssal makkŏlli 14-yŏnman e naonda” [Raw rice wine to come back fourteen years after its prohibition], Tonga ilbo 8 November 1977.
102 “Ilbanmi kap kyesok olla” [Rice price of native varieties continues to rise], Mael kyŏngie 26 September 1979; “Tosi kajŏng yanggok sŏnho ilbanmi chŏngbumi sobi 6 tae 4 piyul” [Urban households prefer native variety rice to the government’s new variety in the ratio 6:4], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 14 June 1983.
its genetic traits. Such rapid changes in the consumer market affected the conditions of production for rice producers. Rice producers increased the cultivation of traditional varieties again to meet the trendy demand of consumers. The failure of Nop’ung, one T’ongil variety, in late 1970s was also critical to the farmers’ withdrawal from the use of T’ongil rice; it left enormous debts to farmers. In addition to this failure, a change in agricultural policy was also one of major reasons for the T’ongil rice’s decline. From the late 1970s, allegedly due to the financial deficit from the double-tiered grain price system, the government halted its financial sponsorship of the new variety.

103 “Ch’ŏngjŏngmi” [Clean rice], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 6 February 1979.
104 “Sinp’umjong pyŏ chaebae kkŏrinda” [Farmers avoid cultivating new varieties of rice], Tonga ilbo 7 April 1980.
This study has looked into the transformation of farmers’ living spaces during the period of rapid industrialization in 1970s South Korea. Under the name of the New Village Movement, the Park Chung Hee government conducted a diverse collection of reconstruction and renovation projects to alter the residential environment of rural areas. While delving deeply into this specific event and period in Korean history, the main focus of this study was not fixed on the New Village Movement itself, nor on a particular person or agrarian policy. The purpose of this study has been to capture the dynamics and relationships between capital and living spaces in the detailed historical context of the New Village Movement. This project of examination has been further guided by the overarching argument that the reconfiguration process of farmers’ daily living spaces played a central role in both renewing and reconfiguring the unequal exchange relationships between the countryside and the city, thereby assisting the growth of manufacturing capital.

Chapter 1 focused on South Korean Land Reform in 1950 and its concomitant agro-economic conditions in the 1950s and 1960s, which explained farmers’ post-war poverty and industrial demand for rural reformation. The subsequent chapters of this study traced the rural New Village Movement of the 1970s and its focus on roof replacement (Chapter 2), house construction (Chapter 3), interior designing (Chapter 4), and village relocation (Chapter 5). Each chapter also paid close attention to the process by which the new rural spaces under transformation were filled with particular commodities such as slate, cement, televisions, and rice. Small-landed farmers, growing industrial capital, and the developmentalist state reflected
their different desires and expectations respectively through the new rural spaces and commodities. Tracking all these dynamics, this study has emphasized the centrality of the exchange relationship between agriculture and manufacturing or between the countryside and the city in understanding the historicity of the New Village Movement.

As a way of concluding this study, this epilogue will turn the perspective from the inside of rural spaces to highways that physically connected the countryside and the city in the 1970s. The highway was the space of movement, but it actually revealed the hierarchical views on the relationship between the countryside and the city, satisfying the demands of manufacturing capital and industrial cities. In fact, this study has already encountered the diverse rhetoric and usages of the highway system in the promotion and construction process of new rural houses and villages. As discussed in the introduction, when the KT (Korea Telecom) Corporation successfully entered the Rwandan market under the façade of the Global New Village Movement in 2013, this news was Headlined under the title, “KT Builds Africa’s IT (Information Technology) Highway.” The expressions of “IT Highway” or “Rwandan New Village Movement” suggest the potential for the replication elsewhere of the economic model of South Korea in the 1970s. However, the object of this so-called highway was soon clarified by the company’s business vision statement, which asserted that, “Rwanda will become our bridgehead for entering the African market, a blue ocean.” Going back to 1970s South Korea, the highway was always the first location where new slate roofs and urban-style houses were placed in order to propagate rural modernization. Housing officials often designed new houses to

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2 “Rúwanda Saemal Undong LTE sokdo ro p’ôjil kŏt,’ Yi Sŏk-ch’ae KT hoejang kja kandumhoe” [Yi Sŏk-ch’ae, KT’s chairman, says at a meeting with media, “Rwandan New Village Movement will spread with the speed of LTE”], Tonga ilbo 31 October 2013.
be oriented towards highways so that vehicle drivers and passengers could look at the displayed development. This directional preference of new houses was sardonically called the “highway-facing aspect (Kosok toro hyang).” When television sets filled the electrified and expanded interior spaces in farmers’ new houses, the temporal impact of TV was often compared with the spatial influence of the highway. Supposing the annihilation of physical differences between the countryside and the city, one writer in 1977 stated that, “if the highway has made the whole nation as a ‘one-day life zone (1-il saenghwalgwŏn, 일 생활권)’ in terms of space, TV is making the city and the countryside as a ‘simultaneous life zone (Tongsi saenghwalgwŏn, 동시 생활권)’ in terms of time.”

Most of all, the highway clearly exhibited how the circular production of evenness and unevenness was central to maintaining and strengthening unequal exchange relationship for the consistent operation of a capitalist market. As discussed throughout this study, diverse spatial discourses and visual strategies reproduced contrasting images between the backward countryside and the developing city. These were intended to promote the reconstruction of the countryside for the industrial ideal of spatial homogenization. Yet, through the reconstructed new spaces, farmers’ debt capital and relatively cheap agricultural produce were exchanged for manufactured commodities, on a more extensive scale and through the mediation of financial capital. To put it differently, the purportedly urbanized or homogenized living spaces actually led to another level of unevenness in the countryside. In this process, many Chaebol groups such as KCC, Pyŏksan, Ssangryong, Tongyang, and Samsung Electronics solidified a foundation for

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3 “Nongch`on pom `un wann`nde… (chung): Saenghwal kwa `uisik” [Even if spring comes to rural village… (2): Livelihood and consciousness], Tonga ilbo 12 April 1980.
4 “Nongch`on sae p’ungsokto (20): TV sidae (6), K`upkyŏkki chophyŏjmun tonong kyŏkch’a” [New trend in the countryside (20): Television era (6), Rapidly narrowed gap between the city and the countryside], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 22 June 1977.
their current business formation. The highway in this epilogue provides clearer instances regarding the circular production of unevenness and evenness needed for the rapid industrialization. As the aforementioned discourse of “one-day life zone” implied, the highway represented a physical completion of homogenization between the countryside and the city. Yet, as the following sections show, it was simultaneously found that the highway reproduced and reinforced city-centrism, the rural exodus, and the spatio-economic hierarchy between the countryside and the city.

One-day Life Zone

The highways being constructed in the 1970s appeared to be completing the ‘homogenization of space’ between the city and the countryside. Newly constructed village roads, which allowed trucks and farm machines to work, were connected to the Seoul-Pusan Highway completed in 1970 and other highways constructed continuously during the 1970s. Through the network of village roads, secondary roads (local roads), primary roads (national freeway), and the highways, rural villages established the foundation for a network of connections to each other and ultimately to the cities.5 People widely began to coin and use a new phrase, the “one-day life zone (1-il saenghwalkwŏn, 1 일 생활권),” which referred to the fact that the improved traffic environment permitted every corner of the country to be reached within a day of travel.6 In the

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5 “Saemaül Undong 10-yŏn ŭi ŭmmi, Nongch’on sŏ tosi ro chŏngsin hyŏngmyŏng hwaksan” [Close examination on 10 years of the New Village Movement; Expansion of spiritual revolution from the countryside to the city], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 December 1980.
6 “Nongch’on sae mosūp, Kosoktoro ttara p’yŏngjuin” [New landscape of rural villages equalized along highway], Chosŏn ilbo 17 December 1971; “Han’guk ŭi chŏlmŭni (2): Nongch’on ch’ŏngnyŏn” [Young people of Korea (2): Rural youth], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 9 January 1971; “T’ŭl chap’inŭn 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [One-day life zone
discourse of the one-day life zone, there seemed to be no distinction between the city and the countryside any longer; they were both part of only “one village (Han maül)” – an undifferentiated nation.7

When the Seoul-Pusan Highway (428 km) was completed in 1970, it was often called the “nation’s main artery (Minjok ŭi taedongmaek).”8 It was a four-lane highway connecting the largest two cities Seoul and Pusan, through the Provinces of Kyŏnggi, North and South Ch’ungch’ŏng, and North and South Kyŏngsang. It was soon combined with other highways such as the Seoul-Inch’ŏn Highway (29.5 km, completed in 1968), the Honam Highway (261 km, 1973), the Namhae Highway (176.5 km, 1973), the Yŏngdong Highway (201 km, 1975), the Tonghae Highway (30 km, 1975), and the Taegu-Masan Highway (84.2 km, 1977).9 As of 1979, the length of the eight highways was over 1,224

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8 “Han’guk kosok toro simnysa [A Ten Year History of Korean Highway]. Kyŏnggi-do Sŏngnam-si: Han’guk kosok toro kongsa. (pp. 179-180)

Indeed, the 1970s was an era of road building. The main arteries of the highways built at this time were constructed in parallel with the expansion and pavement of various rural roads. During the 1970s, farmers and local officials expanded 417 km of village entry roads, 43,558 km of village roads, and 61,797 km of farm roads. To use the analogy of arteries, these village roads could be called ‘capillaries.’ The micro village roads were gradually combined with the highways, allowing trucks and cars to travel from the cities to distant rural villages, and vice versa.

<Picture 6.1> The Intersection of Village Entry Roads, National Roads, and Highways

(#1) T’ongch’ŏn Village, Pukil Township, Ch’ŏngwon County, Ch’ungch’ŏng Province

13 “Saemaŭl Undong 10-yŏn ŭi ŭmni, Nongch’ŏn sŏ tosi ro chŏngsin hyŏngmyŏng hwaksan” [Close examination on 10 years of the New Village Movement; Expansion of spiritual revolution from the countryside to the city], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 December 1980.
(#2) Ibang Village, Taehap Township, Ch’angnyŏng County, Kyŏngsang Province

(#3) Sŏdang Village, Choch’on Township, Wanju County, Chŏlla Province
With the expansion of roads and highways, people began to report with greater frequency a sense of the “compression of time and space.” Newspapers competed to write about the experience of “nature-challenging” speed and “narrowed” distance facilitated by

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14 “Kosoktoro ŭi kyot’ong kyŏngjehak, Yut’ong sudan e k’un pyŏnhwa” [Traffic economics of highway; Great change in means of distribution], Maeil kyŏngje 21 April 1970; “Han’guk 70-yŏnda e namgin kyohun, Muŏt ŭl kyesŭng hago muŏt ŭl pŏril kŏt in’ga (40); Chŏn’guk ‘1-il saenghwalkwŏnhwa’ kosoktoro kaet’ong, Tonong ilch’ehwa inŏmborin chibang t’uksan migak” [Lessons of 1970s Korea, What to inherit and what to abandon (40); Opening of highways and the achievement of ‘One-day life zone of the whole country’; Loss of local specialties and tastes by unification of the city and the countryside], Chosŏn ilbo 18 August 1981;

15 “Minjok ŭi taedongmaek kosoktoro” [Highway, the main artery of the nation], Kyŏngyang sinmun 28 November 1975.

16 “Hanul esŏ pon minjok ŭi ji ŭi tongmaek, Kyŏngbu Kosoktoro ŭi kaet’ong, Haiwe ch’iŏll, Tallin’mun 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [Artery of national will that is seen from the sky; Opening of Seoul-Pusan Highway; A thousand miles (chŏlli) of highway; Running one-day life zone], Chosŏn ilbo 30 June 1970; “Kosoktoro ŭi kyot’ong kyŏngjehak, Yut’ong sudan e k’un pyŏnhwa” [Traffic economics of highway; Great change in means of
the new highways, saying, “Passenger cars can run between Seoul and Pusan within four hours, and good trucks within six hours.”17 “(Old-fashioned) peddlers and travellers, who did not know of wheels, can go 300 ri (120 km) per hour now.”18 “Five hours travel by train between Seoul and Ch’ŏnju was shortened to three hours on the highway, and two and half hours between Seoul and Taejŏn shortened to only one and half hours.”19 “The endlessly far away T’aebaek areas of high and steep mountains contracted by three and half hours of traffic distance.”20 “Visiting local areas became as easy as going on a visit to a neighbouring village, one can depart from Seoul for Pusan in the morning and come back after eating lunch, completing one’s business within the day.”21 One reference likened riding on the new roads to the “magical method of contracting distances (Ch’ukjisul).”22

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17 “Kosoktoro ūi kyot’ong kyŏngjehak, Yu’ŏng sudan e k’un pyŏnhwa” [Traffic economics of highway; Great change in means of distribution], Maeil kyŏngje 21 April 1970.
18 “Han’ul esŏ pon minjok ūiji ūi tongmaek, Kyŏngbu Kosoktoro ūi kaet’ŏng, Haiwei ch’ŏlli, Tallinŭn 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [Artery of national will that is seen from the sky; Opening of Seoul-Pusan Highway; A thousand miles (chŏlli) of highway; Running one-day life zone], Chosŏn ilbo 30 June 1970.
19 “T’ŭl chap’ihn 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [One-day life zone established], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 February 1971.
20 “Minjok ūi taedongmaek kosoktoro” [Highway, the main artery of the nation], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 28 November 1975.
21 “Han’guk 70-yŏndae namgin kyohun, Muŏt ūi kyesŏng hago muŏt ūl pŏril kŏt in’ga (40): Chŏn’guk ‘1-il saenghwalkwŏnhwa’ kosoktoro kaet’ŏng, Tonong ileh’ehwa irŏbŏrin chibang t’ŏksan miagak” [Lessons of 1970s Korea, What to inherit and what to abandon (40): Opening of highways and the achievement of ‘One-day life zone of the whole country’; Loss of local specialties and tastes by unification of the city and the countryside], Chosŏn ilbo 18 August 1981.
22 “Minjok ūi taedongmaek kosoktoro” [Highway, the main artery of the nation], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 28 November 1975.
<Picture 6.2> Commuting Zones According to Hours Spent in Transit

Image from Chosôn ilbo 14 November 1972.
Situated within the politics of its day, the so-called “era of the highway (Haiwei sidae)” was at times directly associated with the rhetoric of the Cold War era. A Chosŏn ilbo article, written to celebrate the opening of the Seoul-Inch’ŏn Highway in 1970, said, “An asphalt-paved main road, where jet airplanes can make a landing, connects a thousand miles (Ch’ŏlli).” This article ends with a hopeful sentence: “The Seoul-Inch’ŏn Highway, which is entangled with the national will of penetrating mountains, filling up valleys, and crossing rivers, might be playing the great role of a main blood artery running along the unified Korean Peninsula sometime in the future.”

Most importantly, however, the roads and highways furthered the representation of ‘homogenization’ between the city and the countryside. People were more likely to replace and calculate distance with hour-units, often categorizing the local areas into groups from one hour distance to five hours. (Picture 6.2) At the time the expression, “The whole country became a ‘one-day life zone’” was almost a cliché, which meant that every corner of the nation was

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23 “Nongch’ён sae mosŏp, Kosoktoro ttara p’yŏngjum” [New landscape of rural villages equalized along highway], Chosŏn ilbo 17 December 1971.
24 “Hanŭl esŏn minjok ŭi jŭi t’aengmaek, Kyŏngbu Kosoktoro ŭi kaet’ong, Haiwei ch’ŏlli, Tallimin 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [Artery of national will that is seen from the sky; Opening of Seoul-Pusan Highway; A thousand miles (chŏlli) of highway; Running one-day life zone], Chosŏn ilbo 30 June 1970.
25 “Hanŭl esŏn minjok ŭi jŭi t’aengmaek, Kyŏngbu Kosoktoro ŭi kaet’ong, Haiwei ch’ŏlli, Tallimin 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [Artery of national will that is seen from the sky; Opening of Seoul-Pusan Highway; A thousand miles (chŏlli) of highway; Running one-day life zone], Chosŏn ilbo 30 June 1970.
26 “Ch’ŏchŏm: Kinŭngbyŏl ro kukt’ŏ kujo kaejo, Kŏnsŏlbu ŭi chonghap kaebal kyehoe naeyong” [Focus: Reconstruction of national territories by function; Contents of Comprehensive National Territorial Plan by Ministry of Construction], Chosŏn ilbo 14 November 1972.
reachable within a day. According to the discourse of one-day life zone, the “gap between the city and the countryside” seemed to be disappearing.28 The gap usually indicated that of lifestyle and living standard.29 Occasionally, going even further than the present progressive or future tense, some declared, “the rural areas have already lost their features as rural areas by becoming a one-day life zone with the cities or even Seoul and the capital region.”30 Another wrote, “Seoul and local areas began to breathe and feel together.”31 Such representations of ‘homogenized’ national space appeared to prelude the presence of an overarching single ‘body’ of territory.

The Exodus to the Cities

The complicated feature of the highways is that these sites of the homogenization also functioned as modes of unevenness. To put it differently, unevenness took place simultaneously at the site of the homogenization. The ‘homogenized’ space by the highways always accompanied an incessant and corresponding re-differentiation between agriculture and manufacturing or between the city and the countryside. The “compression of time and space” on the highways

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28 “Han’ul esŏ pon minjok ŭi jiŭ ŭi tongmaek, Kyŏngbu Kosoktoro ŭi kaet’ong, Haiwei ch’ŏlili, Tallinŭn 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [Artery of national will that is seen from the sky; Opening of Seoul-Pusan Highway; A thousand miles (chŏlili) of highway; Running one-day life zone], Chosŏn ilbo 30 June 1970; “Kosoktoro ŭi kyor’ong kyŏngjehak, Yul’ong sudan e k’ŏn pyŏnhwa” [Traffic economics of highway; Great change in means of distribution], Maeil kyŏngje 21 April 1970; “Minjok ŭi taedongmaek kosoktoro” [Highway, the main artery of the nation], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 28 November 1975.

29 “Han’ul esŏ pon minjok ŭi jiŭ ŭi tongmaek, Kyŏngbu Kosoktoro ŭi kaet’ong, Haiwei ch’ŏlili, Tallinŭn 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [Artery of national will that is seen from the sky; Opening of Seoul-Pusan Highway; A thousand miles (chŏlili) of highway; Running one-day life zone], Chosŏn ilbo 30 June 1970; “Han’guk 70-yŏndae namgin kyo’hnun, Muŏt ŭi kyes’ŭng hago muŏt ŭi pŏril kŏt in’gu” (40): Chŏn’gu’k ’1-il saenghwalkwŏnhwa’ kosoktoro kaet’ong, Tonong ileh’ehwa irŏbŏrin chihang t’ŏksan migak” [Lessons of 1970s Korea, What to inherit and what to abandon (40): Opening of highways and the achievement of ‘One-day life zone of the whole country’; Loss of local specialties and tastes by unification of the city and the countryside], Chosŏn ilbo 18 August 1981.


represented the annihilation of the distinction between the city and the countryside, but thereby strengthened the central position of cities more firmly. This seemingly contradictory aspect itself was crucial to sustaining the rapid economic growth that was dependent on hyper-industrialization, which required a constant influx of people willing to work for low wages, and large stronghold cities to provide cheaper factory locations. In this system, rural areas were to play a supporting role as the source of cheap agro-products to support the low wage system.

From the beginning, the conception of the ‘centre’ was inherent inside the logic of the highway-led discourse of one-day life zone. The direction or desire of the one-day life zone was simply reflected in the following news reports: “Seafood caught in the East or South Sea in the morning can arrive on the dinner table of Seoul citizens on the same day,” or “[Local] merchants of tailor shop, boutique, and construction materials store feel all gloomy because their regular customers go to Seoul for shopping in pursuit of new fashions and trends.” Indeed, the one-day life zone indicated the market centrality and expanded commercial supremacy of Seoul. One of the reports enunciated this in a more outspoken manner, saying, “With the opening of

32 “Kosoktoro ū kyot’ong kyŏngjehak, Yut’ong sudan e k’un pyŏnhwa” [Traffic economics of highway; Great change in means of distribution], Maeil kyŏngje 21 April 1970; “Han’ul esŏ pon minjok ŭi jji ŭi tongmaek, Kyŏngbu Kosoktoro ū kaet’ong, Haiwei ch’ŏllı, Tallin’n 1-il saenghwalkwŏn” [Artery of national will that is seen from the sky; Opening of Seoul-Pusan Highway; A thousand miles (chŏllı) of highway; Running one-day life zone], Chosŏn ilbo 30 June 1970; “Minjok ū taedongmaek kosoktoro” [Highway, the main artery of the nation], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 28 November 1975; “Han’guk 70-yŏndae namgın kyoohun, Muŏt ūl kyesûng hago muŏt ūl pŏril kŏt in’ga (40): Chŏn’guk ‘1-il saenghwalkwŏnhwa’ kosoktoro kaet’ong, Tonong ilch’ehwa irŏbŏrin chibang t’ŭksan-migak” [Lessons of 1970s Korea, What to inherit and what to abandon (40): Opening of highways and the achievement of ‘One-day life zone of the whole country’; Loss of local specialties and tastes by unification of the city and the countryside], Chosŏn ilbo 18 August 1981.
33 “Nongch’on sae mosŏp, Kosoktoro ttara p’yŏngjun” [New landscape of rural villages equalized along highway], Chosŏn ilbo 17 December 1971; “Minjok ū taedongmaek kosoktoro” [Highway, the main artery of the nation], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 28 November 1975.
34 “Minjok ū taedongmaek kosoktoro” [Highway, the main artery of the nation], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 28 November 1975.
35 “Nongch’on sae mosŏp, Kosoktoro ttara p’yŏngjun” [New landscape of rural villages equalized along highway], Chosŏn ilbo 17 December 1971.
Highways, the city and the countryside of the whole nation became narrowed into a complete one-day life zone centering on Seoul."\(^{36}\)

Highways not only reinforced the central position of the capital city but also helped accelerate the rural exodus to other manufacturing cities. According to a 1971 sociological research paper on the influence of the Seoul-Inch’ŏn Highway on nearby rural areas,\(^{37}\) farming residents often became less motivated to farm due to relatively high wage levels available in the construction industry. The researchers found that many young farmers left their home village to work for urban construction companies. Increased farmland prices especially around interchange areas also encouraged farmers to sell their land and move out to the city. These research cases were found most frequently among the farmers whose village had a direct and close contact with highways. The wide-ranging change in rural population also came from the flexibility in selecting locations for new factories. The convenience of highway transportation allowed industrial factories and complexes to leave Seoul and Pusan and locate in the local areas.\(^{38}\) As seen in Picture 6.3, manufacturers built new factories mainly on highway corridors in the 1970s.\(^{39}\) The number of operating factories in and around inland cities near the highways

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\(^{36}\) “Nongch’on sae mosŭp, Kosoktoro ttara p’yŏngjjun” [New landscape of rural villages equalized along highway], \textit{Chosŏn ilbo} 17 December 1971.


\(^{38}\) “Nonghyŏp chika chosa, Tosi rŭl apchir’ānŭn nongch’on chika sangsŏng ŭi chŏbyŏn, Pakkuŏjin ‘chudo p’aet’ŏn’’” [Agricultural Cooperatives’ investigation of land price; Reasons for rising land price in the countryside ahead of the city; Reversed role pattern in forming land price], \textit{Maeil kyŏngje} 3 May 1973; “Minjok ŭi taedongmaek kosoktoro” [Highway, the main artery of the nation], \textit{Kyŏnghyang sinmun} 28 November 1975; “Han’guk 70-yŏndaem namgii kyohun, Muŏt ŭi kyesŏng hago muŏt ŭi pŏril kŏt in’ga (40): Chŏn’guk ‘1-il saenghwalkwŏnhwa’ kosoktoro kaet’ong, Tonong iche’ehwa irŏbŏrin chibang t’ŏksan-migak” [Lessons of 1970s Korea, What to inherit and what to abandon (40); Opening of highways and the achievement of ‘One-day life zone of the whole country’; Loss of local specialties and tastes by unification of the city and the countryside], \textit{Chosŏn ilbo} 18 August 1981.

The expansion of local cities corresponded with the government’s policy to decentralize population concentrated around the capital as well. The populations of Seoul had explosively increased from 2.5 million in 1960, to 5.4 million in 1970 and 8.4 million in 1980; the population of the capital region including Seoul was already over 10 million in the 1970s. The government knew that the influx of population to Seoul was due mainly to the rural exodus, and expected to solve the problem by developing other large cities so that they could absorb the rural population rushing into Seoul. For the purpose of dispersing the population

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43 “Chibang tosi chipchung kaebal nongch’on in’gu yuip, Sôul kwamil makke p’yôngka kyosudan pogo” [A government panel of professors advises to develop local cities intensively to stop influx of rural population and overcrowding in Seoul], Kyônghyang sinmun 4 June 1975.
44 “Kôdae tosi, kôchôm tosi, chungso tosi, nongch’on tosi tông chôn kukt’o rôl 4-tanwi ro kaebal” [Government to develop whole country under four regional categories of metropolitan cities, stronghold cities, small and medium cities, rural cities], Kyônghyang sinmun 28 February 1970; “Sasôl: Kukt’o üi chonghapchôk kyunhyông kaebal ül wihan chônje” [Focus: Mammoth construction work rearranges national territories; 10-Year Comprehensive National Territorial Plan aims to decentralize urban population and industry for balanced development under control], Chosôn ilbo 1 March 1970; “Ch’ochôm: Mamosô yôksa kukt’o chaep’yônsông, Chonghap kaebal 10-kaenyôn kyeheok kù naeyong, Tosi konggô ül punsan, T’ôngje sok kyunhyông kaebal mokchôk” [Focus: Mammoth construction work rearranges national territories; 10-Year Comprehensive National Territorial Plan aims to decentralize urban population and industry for balanced development under control], Chosôn ilbo 10 September
this way, the government drafted policies to foster what they called “stronghold cities (Kŏchŏm tosi)” in Taejŏn, Chŏnju, Kwangju, Taegu, Ulsan, and Masan.45 These cities were located along the highways and already equipped with urban infrastructure to accommodate a large influx of people. The government expected these large stronghold cities to absorb 2.6 million by expanding industrial complexes around their suburban areas.46 In parallel with that, the government also developed the so-called “industrial belt” connecting P’ohang, Ulsan, Pusan, Masan, and Yŏsu in the expectation to induce one more million migrants.47
The highway was like a conveyor belt that satisfied unilaterally the demands of manufacturing capital and state governance by conveying rural labour power to industrial cities in a more speedy and massive way. To invest in and support the stronghold cities and industrial belt near highways met the needs of both industrial capital and the government. The growing
manufacturing industries needed to secure enough labour power and cheaper real estate in local areas. The government was in need of controlling the rate of population growth in the capital city.\textsuperscript{48} As compared to 1970, the total population of South Korea increased by 16.5% in 1978; for the same period, that of Seoul and Pusan increased by 44.6% and the other cities increased by 58.1%, while the rural areas decreased by 7.1%.\textsuperscript{49} Some of the early 1980s reports regarding the effect of highways on the decentralization of population concluded that the rate of population growth in Seoul slowed down due to the growing local cities near the highways in the 1970s;\textsuperscript{50} less consideration was given to the swiftly increasing rural exodus and the hollowing out of the agricultural sector. Consequently, as discussed in Chapter 5, further mechanization and collective farming at the local village level was emphasized much more as the only solution to the reduction of agricultural workforce.

The Hierarchy of Spaces

Behind the growing industrial cities along the highways, there was the developmentalist state’s hierarchical understanding of space, where manufacturing cities positioned at the top and rural villages at the bottom. From the early 1970s, the government’s diverse plans for population

\textsuperscript{48} “Sudokwŏn in’gu chaep’yŏnsŏng kibon kyehoeck ūl ch’ujŏk handa” [In-depth report on the basic plan for dispersing the population in the capital area; Successful case in the city of Paris becomes a benchmark; Expectation on stronghold cities], Chosŏn ilbo 11 March 1977.

\textsuperscript{49} Han’guk toro kongsa [Korea Expressway Corporation]. 1980. Han’guk kosok toro simnyŏnsa [A Ten Year History of Korean Highway]. Kyŏnggi-do Sŏngnam-si: Han’guk toro kongsa. (pp. 675-676)

\textsuperscript{50} Han’guk toro kongsa [Korea Expressway Corporation]. 1980. Han’guk kosok toro simnyŏnsa [A Ten Year History of Korean Highway]. Kyŏnggi-do Sŏngnam-si: Han’guk toro kongsa. (pp. 676-677); “Han’guk 70-yŏndae namgin kyo hun, Muŏt ūl kyesŭng hago muŏt ūl pŏril kŏt in’ga (40): Chŏn’guk ‘1-il saenghwalkwŏnhwa’ kosoktoro kaet’ong, Tonong ilch’ehwa irŏbŏrin chihang t’ŏksan migak” [Lessons of 1970s Korea, What to inherit and what to abandon (40): Opening of highways and the achievement of ‘One-day life zone of the whole country’; Loss of local specialties and tastes by unification of the city and the countryside], Chosŏn ilbo 18 August 1981.
‘control’ and regional ‘development’ categorized the whole country into the groups of metropolitan cities, stronghold cities, small and medium cities, and rural cities, foreseeing that each city unit would function as the centres of consumption and cultural activities in different scale for rural residents as well as urban workers. In particular, stronghold cities were designed to work as the centre of the locally subdivided life zones in the areas other than metropolitan Seoul and Pusan. In this hierarchical grouping of space, only cities appeared to complete and maintain a sustainable unit of local communities.

Such a city-centred approach to demographics and regional planning was reflected in the New Village Movement itself as well. In the expanded design of the Village Structural Improvement Project, government authorities thought that the rural communities would achieve their self-sufficiency ideally by belonging to larger life zones hierarchically; first, by joining a basic life zone, which would be formed through grouping small rural villages equipped with minimum amenities; secondly, a larger daily life zone in township (Myŏn) level, structured by connecting the basic life zones; thirdly, a town (Ŭp) or local city (Si) level’s life zone, composed by collecting the smaller zones; and finally, a great-sphere life zone, completed by expanding the life zones to the scale of large stronghold cities. (Picture 6.4) The so-called Small Town Development Project (Sodoŏp Kakkugi Saŏp) was part of this stage-oriented rural planning in the

51 “Kŏdae tosi, kŏchŏm tosi, chungso tosi, nongch’on tosi tung chŏn kukt’o rŭl 4-tanwi ro kaebal” [Government to develop whole country under four regional categories of metropolitan cities, stronghold cities, small and medium cities, rural cities], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 28 February 1970.
52 “Sudokwŏn in’gu chaep’yŏnsŏng kibon kyeohoek ŭl ch’ujŏk handa” [In-depth report on the basic plan for dispersing the population in the capital area; Successful case in the city of Paris becomes a benchmark; Expectation on stronghold cities], Chosŏn ilbo 11 March 1977.
53 “Sudokwŏn in’gu chaep’yŏnsŏng kibon kyeohoek ŭl ch’ujŏk handa” [In-depth report on the basic plan for dispersing the population in the capital area; Successful case in the city of Paris becomes a benchmark; Expectation on stronghold cities], Chosŏn ilbo 11 March 1977.
54 Naemubu chibang haengjŏngguk nongch’on chut’aek kaeryangkwa [Division of Rural Housing Improvement at the Ministry of Home Affairs], 1979. Minjok ŭ ŭaeŏksa: Nongch’on chut’aeksa [The Great Construction Project of the Nation: The History of Rural Housing]. Seoul: Naemubu. (p. 545)
New Village Movement. According to the organization system of life zones, small towns in the rural areas were viewed as a “middle zone” or “connecting town” between rural villages and large cities that the government had to develop through intensive and intentional support. In this way, diverse new village projects supported a hierarchical space strategy that was oriented towards maintaining the centrality of large manufacturing cities.

While the centre of rural life moved to the cities following the highways, the countryside was being redefined as a place only for agricultural production, though farmers were viewed as growing consumers in and outside their new house and village. To address the role of rural areas in the way was more systemized in the Comprehensive National Territorial Plan 1972-1981. In the 1970s, diverse regional development projects appeared and disappeared,
sometimes overlapping with each other. The Comprehensive National Territorial Plan was chief among them, promising the “balanced and comprehensive development of the national territories.” The plan divided the whole country into several large zones, such as regions for pivotal management (capital region), food supply, raw material supply, manufacturing, commerce, and sightseeing. The plan purposed to consolidate infrastructural facilities for the regional functions of production. In 1972, the Minister of Construction, Chang Ye-jun, proudly forecasted that, “In the 1980s when this plan will have been completed, all of our national territories will be directly connected to production following the land use planning, without leaving even an inch of land unproductive. We will construct well-planned cities, mechanized and rearranged farmland, highly efficient industrial complexes, wide and paved roads, and paradise free from damages by storm, flood, and drought.” As expressed in Chang’s statement, the plan placed great value on production in the slogan of “Transform the Whole National

November 1972; “Ch’ŏchŏm: Kinŭngbyŏl ro kukt’o kujo kaejo, Kŏnsŏlbu ŭi chonghap kaebal kyehoe kaejang naeyong” [Focus: Reconstruction of national territories by function; Contents of Comprehensive National Territorial Plan by Ministry of Construction], Chosŏn ilbo 14 November 1972.
58 “Kukt’o kujo chŏnmyŏn kaep’yŏn” [The complete reorganization of national territories], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 November 1972; “Kukt’o kaebal ŭi ch’ŏngsajin” [Blueprint for developing national territories], Mael kyŏngje 31 August 1971.
59 “Kukt’o kaebal ŭi ch’ŏngsajin” [Blueprint for developing national territories], Mael kyŏngje 31 August 1971; “Ch’ŏchŏm: Kinŭngbyŏl ro kukt’o kujo kaejo, Kŏnsŏlbu ŭi chonghap kaebal kyehoe kaejang naeyong” [Focus: Reconstruction of national territories by function; Contents of Comprehensive National Territorial Plan by Ministry of Construction], Chosŏn ilbo 14 November 1972.
60 “Ch’ŏn kukt’o kinŭngjŏk kaep’yŏn” [The reorganization of the whole national territories by function; Contents of Comprehensive National Territorial Plan by Ministry of Construction], Chosŏn ilbo 14 November 1972.
Territory into ‘Industrial Base.’”61 For the productive use of land, the plan applied the principle of division of labour on a geographical level, expecting rural areas to remain as a base for ‘food supply.’ According to this plan, Kyŏngsang Province in the southeast of the Korean Peninsula included substantially more industrial complexes and base cities as compared to Chŏlla Province, the largest granary located in the southwest. The government’s financial investment converged on the manufacturing zones throughout the rapid industrialization in the 1970s. Meanwhile, residents of Chŏlla Province had a sense that they had been “discriminated” in the ‘development process,’62 which resulted in acute political conflicts continuing until now.

According to the Comprehensive National Territorial Plan, the highway was fully functional for the purpose of the food supply. To sustain the economic growth driven by rapid industrialization, it was crucial to provide cheap agri-products to low-paid labourers living in large industrial cities. The highway narrowed the distance between urban consumers and rural producers, and motivated farmers to diversify farm produce to meet the demands of the urban market, saving distribution costs with mass faster transportation system. Farmers began to pay more attention to the real-time price of rice and other products in the Seoul agricultural markets.63 In particular, vegetables and fruits, whose freshness was an important factor in marketability, became a much more attractive commercial agricultural product for farmers to grow.64 It was around the time of the opening of highways that the traditional slash-and-burn

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64 “Nongsanmul yut’ong ūi kündaeowa” [Modernized distribution of agricultural products]. Maeil kyŏngje 29 May 1971; “Kyŏngbu Kosoktoro kaet’ong i molgo onnŭn ch’ŏllī kil saebaram (3): Kippŭm kwa chŏhang sok ūi
farming zones in Yŏngdong region, Kangwŏn Province, changed into large agricultural complexes where farmers produced profitable highland vegetables and sent them directly to urban markets.65 For the public, however, the most important issue was how much highways could deflate the consumer price of rice by reducing distribution costs.66 Farmers still suffered from relatively low rice prices vis-à-vis manufactured goods, and often did not meet even the cost of production.67 The expanded urban market was merely the place where the highways delivered the cheap farm products and low-wage workers needed to fuel the growth of cities and to meet the needs of manufacturing capital.

66 “Kosoktoro ŭi kyot’ong kyŏngjehak, Yut’ong sudan e k’ŭn pyŏnhwa” [Traffic economics of highway; Great change in means of distribution], Maeil kyŏngje 21 April 1970.
67 “Nongch’on ŭl pŏtkinda (5): Nŏmu ssan nongsanmulkap” [Disclosure of reality in the countryside (5): Underpriced agricultural products], Kyŏngyang simmun 19 January 1970; “Kŭmmyŏn ch’ugok saengsanbi wŏnka kyesan ŭi kŭn’gŏ pagyak” [Unsubstantiated calculation for this year’s production cost of fall-harvested grain], Maeil kyŏngje 16 November 1971; “Nongga kyo’yŏk chokŏn ŭi akhw’a” [Deteriorated exchange conditions for farm households], Tonga ilbo 25 March 1974; “Chŏgokka chŏngch’ak sŏnjŏng ŭl” [Rectify low grain price policy!], Maeil kyŏngje 26 October 1974; “Chŏgokka ro singnyang chaebae kip’i” [Farmers avoid cultivating staple grains due to low grain price], Tonga ilbo 31 October 1974; “Chŏkch’ŏng mika ro ch’ŭnbsan ŭiyok ŭl, Nonggyŏng chŏnmun’ga t’oronhoe” [For the realistic adjustment of grain price, wage, interest rate, and exchange rate], Tonga ilbo 14 October 1975; “Nongmin hŭasaeng kangyo chŏngsan chŏbasa” [To force farmers to be sacrificed impedes the increase of production], Tonga ilbo 3 November 1975; “Sinmin sŏngmyŏng, Nongmin ch’urhyŏl ŭl kangyo, Plhamníjŏk chŏgokka” [Sinmin Party criticizes unreasonable low grain price that forces farmers to be sacrificed], Tonga ilbo 14 October 1977; “Sinmin sŏngmyŏng, Silsaengsanbi edo midał” [Government’s purchasing price of rice is below the cost of production, criticizes Sinmin Party], Kyŏngyang simmun 14 October 1977; “Kokka, imgŭm, kŭmni, hwannya hyŏnsilhwa rŭl” [For the realistic adjustment of grain price, wage, interest rate, and exchange rate], Tonga ilbo 11 May 1979.
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Kangjin ilbo
Kungmin ilbo
Kyŏnghyang sinmun
Kyŏngyŏng sinmun
Maeil kyŏngje
Naeil sinmun
Namwŏn Sunch’ang int’ŏnet nyusū
Nongmin munhwaw
Nongmin sinmun
Sanŏp kyŏngje
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"Nongch’on kungp’ip ŭi taech’aek ŭn?” [What are the countermeasures against rural poverty?], Tonga ilbo 14 January 1955.

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"Nongch’on sae mosŭp, Kosoktoro ttara p’yŏngjun” [New landscape of rural villages equalized along highway], Chosŏn ilbo 17 December 1971.


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“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (19): TV sidae (5), Milgo tanggigo… P’anmae kyŏngjaeng mant’ae”
[New trend in the countryside (19): Television era (5), Push and pull of bargaining…
Various phases of sales competition], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 21 June 1977.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (20): TV sidae (6), Kŭpkyŏkhi chophyŏjinŭn tonong kyŏkch’a”
[New trend in the countryside (20): Television era (6), Rapidly narrowed gap between the
city and the countryside], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 22 June 1977.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (23): Chŏnch’uk (1), Much’wimi mujŏngsŏ rŭl pŏnnûnda” [New
trend in the countryside (23): Record player (1), Removing the want for hobbies and
taste], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 30 June 1977.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (29): Nongmin changnong sok kyŏnyang ch’iyŏlhan p’anmaejŏn”
[New trend in the countryside (29): Fierce sales war aims inside farmers’ wardrobe],
Kyŏnghyang sinmun 12 July 1977.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (30): Ch’uksa ekkaji chŏnhwa, Saengsan nop’iryŏ” [New trend
in the countryside (30): Even cattle shed and pigsty electrified to boost productivity],
Kyŏnghyang sinmun 15 July 1977.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (31): Nakto oji ekkaji kŏsen chŏnhwa param” [New trend in the
countryside (31): Craze for electrification sweeps even remote islands and villages],

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (123): Kongdan sahoe (20), Sanŏp ipchi” [New trend in the
countryside (123): Industrial complex society (20), Location of industrial complex],
Kyŏnghyang sinmun 14 March 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (142): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (1), Chut’aek kaeryang” [New trend in the
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8 May 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (144): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (3), Ch’oga chibung aehwan” [New trend in the
countryside (144): Housing revolution (3), Joys and sorrows of thatched roof],
Kyŏnghyang sinmun 11 May 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (145): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (4), Mujigae chibung (sang)” [New trend in the
countryside (145): Housing revolution (4), Rainbow roof (1)], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 13
May 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (146): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (5), Mujigae chibung (ha)” [New trend in the
countryside (146): Housing revolution (5), Rainbow roof (2)], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 15
May 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (147): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (6), P’eint’ŭch’il” [New trend in the
countryside (147): Housing revolution (6), Painting], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 18 May 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (149): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (8), Nŭrŏnan ch’ŏl’ŭm” [New trend in the
countryside (149): Housing revolution (8), Increased iron gates], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 25
May 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (150): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (9), Sūlleit’ŭ chaebŏl” [New trend in the
countryside (150): Housing revolution (9), Slate Chaebŏl conglomerates], Kyŏnghyang
sinmun 27 May 1978.
“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (151): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (10), 5-saek kaetmaül” [New trend in the countryside (151): Housing revolution (10), Five-coloured seaside village], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 29 May 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (154): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (13), Saem sotnūn ŭiyok” [New trend in the countryside (154): Housing revolution (13), Morale goes up], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 3 June 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (155): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (14), Munhwa chut’aek” [New trend in the countryside (155): Housing revolution (14), Cultural house], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 5 June 1978.


“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (158): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (17), Kani sangsudo” [New trend in the countryside (158): Housing revolution (17), Simple facilities for water supply], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 June 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (159): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (18), Ipsik puŏk” [New trend in the countryside (159): Housing revolution (18), Stand-up kitchen], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 12 June 1978.


“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (163): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (22), P’yojun sŏlgye” [New trend in the countryside (163): Housing revolution (22), Standardized blueprints], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 8 July 1978.

“Nongch’on sae p’ungsokto (164): Chugŏ pyŏnhyŏk (23), Kyugyŏk chajae” [New trend in the countryside (164): Housing revolution (23), Standardized construction materials], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 11 July 1978.


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“Nongch’on to tŏ k’ŭn chip ěl wŏnhanda” [Rural villages also want larger houses], Han’guk ilbo 1 March 1978.

“Nongch’on ŭi ch’aap sodong” [Property seizure disturbance in rural villages], Tonga ilbo 14 December 1954.

“Nongch’on ŭi mosun t’agaech’aek” [Remedy for the problems in the rural villages], Kyǒnghyang sinmun 9 August 1954.

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“Nongch’on wanjang chŏnhwa rŭl, Ŏnje kkaji horongpul man k’yŏya han” [For the complete electrification of the countryside; Until when do we have to use only a kerosene lamp?], Kyǒnghyang sinmun 19 October 1970.

“Nongga kyoıyŏk chokŏn ŭi akhwa” [Deteriorated exchange conditions for farm households], Tonga ilbo 25 March 1974.

“Nongga ŭi mihak” [Aesthetics of farm house], Sǒul sinmun 23 March 1978.

“Nonghyŏp chika chosa, Tosi rŭl apchirŭnŭn nongch’on chika sangsŏng ŭi chŏbyŏn, Pakkuŏjin ‘chudo p’aet’ŏn’” [Agricultural Cooperatives’ investigation of land price; Reasons for rising land price in the countryside ahead of the city; Reversed role pattern in forming land price], Maeil kyǒngje 3 May 1973.

“Nongmin hŭisaeng kangyo chŏngsan chŏhae” [To force farmers to be sacrificed impedes the increase of production], Tonga ilbo 3 November 1975.

“Nongmin to hyŏn’gŭm ŭl kajil su itke” [Enable farmers also to have affordable cash in hand], Kyǒnghyang sinmun 4 September 1953.

“Nongmin ŭl salliryŏmyŏn (sang)” [To save farmers (1)], Kyǒnghyang sinmun 30 March 1956.

“Nongminderül T’ongil pyŏ haebaek kip’i, Chŏngbu sumac mulyang pujok ttaemun” [Farmers avoid cultivating T’ongil rice due to insufficient government acquisition], Tonga ilbo 21 February 1983.

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“Nongŏp hyŏpcho pŏban t’onggwa” [Law on Agricultural Cooperatives passes], Tonga ilbo 2 February 1957.

“Nongsanmul yut’ong ŭi kūndaehwa” [Modernized distribution of agricultural products], Maeil kyǒngje 29 May 1971.
“Nongsusanbu chosa nongga munhwa yongp’um poyu nûrô” [Farm households possess more culture products, reports Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery], Maeil kyöngje 19 May 1981.

“Nongûn pôban wanjôn t’onggwâ” [Law on the Agricultural Bank passes completely], Tonga ilbo 3 February 1957.

“Nongûn sôllip wi kusông” [Committee set up to establish an Agricultural Bank], Kyônghyang sinmun 8 April 1957.

“Nop’ûn saram onda, Pyôrakch’igi nongga kaeryang” [Big-shots coming, Hurried construction of farm houses], Tonga ilbo 3 June 1978.

“Nûlman kanûn nongch’on p’yega” [Increasingly ruined rural houses], Sin’a ilbo 14 June 2008.

“P’adong chojanghan k’arût’el, Siment’û kongp’an hoesa Sôhan Sirôp pujông anp’ak” [Cartel instigates cement shock, Scandal of Sôhan Business Corporation for cement joint-sale], Maeil kyöngje 24 May 1978.

“P’anajip 343-ch’ae sosil” [Fire destroys 343 shanty houses], Tonga ilbo 13 April 1970.

“P’anajip 65-ch’ae chônso” [65 shanty houses burned down], Tonga ilbo 24 December 1969.

“P’ungjak edo kippûm morûn nongch’on, Kokka p’oknak e pimyông” [Gloomy farm villages despite a good harvest; Shrieking in grain price collapse], Kyônghyang sinmun 6 October 1953.

“P’ungnyôn kigûn üi ch’amsang” [The misery of a rich year’s famine], Tonga ilbo 4 December 1957.

“Paji chôgori e chungjôlmo ssûn kyôk” [Like wearing a traditional Korean costume with a foreign hat], Han’guk ilbo 3 February 1978.

“Pap an mûgûndu hoegyôn, ’Pukhan e singnyang wônjo yôngû’” [President Park holds New Year press conference, “We’re ready to provide food aid to North Korea”], Kyônghyang sinmun 12 January 1977.

“Pissan nongch’on chônhwabi, yônch’ajôk sisôl kyehoek chaejông chiwôn ül” [Expensive rural electrification; Facility planning and financial support required yearly], Kyônghyang sinmun 10 November 1970.

“Pôlssô chônmong üi pan iipto sônmae” [Half of the total farm households already sell standing rice plants before harvest], Kyônghyang sinmun 25 September 1960.

“Pôlssô put’ô iipto sônmae” [The advance sale of rice already occurring], Tonga ilbo 14 August 1955.
“Pŏlsŏ put’o ipto ūi sŏnmae sŏnghaeng” [The advance sale of rice is already prevalent], Tonga ilbo 2 August 1958.

“Pŏlsŏ put’o kogaedŭn ipto sŏnmae” [The advance sale of rice already rears its head], Tonga ilbo 28 July 1956.

“Pori sŏnmae tto sijak” [The advance sale of barley starts again], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 15 March 1953.

“Porit kogae aptugo sokch’ul han chasal” [Facing the Barley Hill, a rash of suicides], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 18 January 1956.

“Porit kogae e hŏdŏginŭn nongch’on” [Rural villages struggling with Barley Hill], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 21 May 1955.

“Ppalgan chip, p’aran chip, noran chip” [Red house, blue house, and yellow house], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 12 April 1972.

“Puhwangjuŏng e kŏllyŏ imi 5-myŏng samang” [Five dead already from yellowish swelling from starvation], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 30 August 1958.

“Pujŏng kongmuwŏn tto 2-kŏn, Konggŭm t’osuse tung ul ch’akpok” [Two more corruption cases of officials; Embezzlement of public money and the Land Yield Tax], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 5 February 1959.

“Pujŏng seri p’igŏm” [Corrupt tax officials arrested], Tonga ilbo 19 August 1955.

“Pul’ŭnggaek p’anjajip” [Shanty house, an unwelcome guest], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 6 July 1970.

“Pyŏkchisŏn ch’ogŭnmok’i ro yŏnmyŏng” [Remote villagers subsist on herb-roots and tree-bark], Tonga ilbo 31 January 1957.

“Pyŏksan, Pyŏksan Kŏnsŏl p’asan pulttong t’wilkka kkŭngkkŭng” [Pyŏksan Group fears the aftereffects of Pyŏksan Construction’s bankruptcy], Asia kyǒngje 3 April 2014.

“Pyŏng chugo yak chugo” [Give the disease and offer the remedy], Tonga ilbo 8 June 1979.

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“Sach’i p’ungjo tosi esŏ nongch’on ūro, TV naengjanggo tung halbu p’anmae sŏnghaeng” [Tendency toward extravagance moves from the city to the countryside; Installment sale for television and refrigerator prevails], Tonga ilbo 19 November 1974.

“Sae nongch’on ūi chŏn’gae, Chŏnbuk Wanju-gun Changdong-ri Pudong maŭl” [Inauguration of new rural village: At Pudong village in Changdong-ri, Wanju County, North Chŏlla Province], Sŏul sinmun 19 April 1978.

“Sae nongch’on ūi chŏn’gae: Kangwŏn P’yŏngch’ang-ang gun Pongp’yŏng-ŭn samgŏri changt’ŏ” [Inauguration of new rural village: At the Samgŏri market site in Pongp’yŏng Township, P’yŏngch’ang County, Kangwŏn Province], Sŏul sinmun 3 May 1978.
“Saemaŭl ch’ŏngsin chŏnp’a 3-yŏn, 17-kaeguk sŏ paewŏ ka” [Three years of spreading the spirit of the New Village Movement; 17 Countries visited to learn], Tonga ilbo 20 July 2010.

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“Saemaŭl chido hadŏn myŏnjang sunjik” [Township chief dies at his post while carrying out New Village Movement], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 22 March 1972.

“Saemaŭl TV kaebal kyehŏek” [New Village TV development plan], Maeil kyŏngje 1 June 1973.

“Saemaŭl TV kaebal, han tae e samman wŏn sŏn” [New Village TV development, About three thousand wŏn per one], Tonga ilbo 1 June 1973.

“Saemaŭl ŭl kada (3): Apsŏn maŭl, twijin maŭl” [At the sites of New Village Movement (3): Advanced village, lagged village], Tonga ilbo 11 April 1972.

“Saemaŭl ŭl kada (4): Chipko nōmyŏya hal saryedŭl” [At the sites of New Village Movement (4): Some cases we need to address], Tonga ilbo 12 April 1972.

“Saemaŭl Undong 10-yŏn ŭi ŭmmi, Nongch’on sŏ tosi ro chŏngsin hyŏngmyŏng hwaksan” [Close examination on 10 years of the New Village Movement; Expansion of spiritual revolution from the countryside to the city], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 10 December 1980.

“Saemaŭl Undong ŭi kŭnŭl: Koemul, sülleit’ŭ chibung ŭl ŏttŏk’ŏ” [The shadow of the New Village Movement: How to deal with a monster, the slate roofs], Kungmin ilbo 29 June 2013.


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“Salch’ungje mŏkko chasal” [Man commits suicide by ingesting pesticide], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 21 September 1957.

“Sanggongbu taejungyong TV yangsan” [Ministry of Commerce and Industry mass-produces TVs for popular use], Maeil kyŏngje 21 January 1974.


“Sangsang oe ŭi ch’amseang…, Chŏllyang nongga honam hyŏnji pogo” [Misery beyond imagination; Field report on food-short farm households in Chŏlla Province], Tonga ilbo 11 March 1957.

“Sanŏp inmaek (221): Sikp’um kongŏp (26), Myŏnnyu ḍapkye (2)” [Personal connections in the industry (221): Food industry (26), Business of instant noodle production (2)], Maeli kyŏngje 23 June 1975.

“Santtŭthan munhwa chut’aek ǔl chiŭn nongga esŏnŭn hōtkan, oeyangkan ŏngkuska rŭl ǒttŏktie chiŏya hanŭnya ka munjeda” [The problem is how to build auxiliary buildings such as barns and cattle sheds after constructing a new cultural farm houses], Kyŏnghyang sinmun 17 July 1978.


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“Silsuŏpkye chujang, ‘Siment’ŭ k’arŭl el chūkkak haech’e twaeya mappang” [‘Cement cartel must be broken up,’ asserts actual user industries], Maeil kyŏngje 31 October 1977.

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“Sinmin sŏngmyŏng, Silsaengsanbi edo midal” [Government’s purchasing price of rice is below the cost of production, criticizes Sinmin Party], Kyŏngyang sinmun 14 October 1977.

“Sinp’umjong pyŏ chaebae kkŏrina” [Farmers avoid cultivating new varieties of rice], Tonga ilbo 7 April 1980.

“Sinsŏl-dong p’anach’on e k’ŭn pul” [Big fire in shanty town in Sinsŏl-dong], Mael kyŏngje 17 December 1969.

“Sobijadŭl 7, 8-yŏn tongan p’ihae” [Consumers suffer damages for seven to eight years], Kyŏngyang sinmun 23 May 1978.

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