Food for Empire:
Wartime Food Politics
on the Korean Homefront, 1937-1945

by

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of East Asian Studies
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Abstract

This research examines how the minute details of food production and consumption in colonial Korea became a target of wartime food politics under the rubric of improving productivity and efficiency for war efforts. In examining the politics, this research takes a more expansive approach to power and politics by locating the agency of power beyond the state and understanding its nature as more than simply totalitarian or suppressive. To this end, this study investigates the knowledge production of a group of experts—ranging from agronomists (Chapter 1 and 2) and nutritional scientists (Chapter 3 and 4), to cookbook authors (Chapter 4) and gardening manual writers (Chapter 5)—who, each in their own way, voiced opinions on the political, cultural, and social issues of the time beyond the sheer material concerns of enhancing productivity in food production and consumption. This research pays especially close attention to three recurring and entangled topics: first, the changing position of the colony and its population in the expanding empire; second, the geographical relationship between city and countryside in the urbanizing peninsula; and finally, ideal gender roles in the bourgeois domestic space. By attending to these themes through the lens of race, region, gender, and class, this study traces how a range of varied social aspirations betray tensions, dilemmas, and contractions of the time
rather than converging in the fascist ideology for continuous improvement in total harmony, free from social conflicts.
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Introduction

Total War and Food Politics for Productivity

In the modern era, food came to be considered not only a private matter but also a public affair that required scientific management and social intervention.\(^1\) Consequently, even the most minute details of everyday interaction with food became a focal point for politics, wherein a range of stakeholders, from government officials and farmers, to consumers and experts, weighed in to offer competing visions for a better food management. The urgency for an efficient food system was especially acute for the total war regimes around the world during the mid-20th century; regardless of their place on the political spectrum, liberals, socialists, and fascists, all shared the view that a well-managed food system was not only a marker of good government but also an urgent matter of military concern. The road to victory demanded expansion of labor power and this meant ensuring the most basic level of nutrition to all those who would play a part in the war effort, civilians and soldiers alike. The war, as a state of exception, not only justified social intervention into every corner of food-related activities of the populations, but also deemed it a necessity. Nevertheless, despite the powerful pretext, as many global cases of food issues during wartimes amply demonstrate, encroachment of wartime politics into daily life, down to the most basic of human needs, was hardly a smooth process. Wartime food politics was instead full of tension, conflict, and indeed, violence.\(^2\)

This research aims to contribute to

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\(^2\) Here are some recent works whose specific focus is on wartime food politics. Ian Mosby, *Food Will Win the War: The Politics, Culture, and Science of Food on Canada’s Home Front* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), Katarzyna J. Cwiertka ed., *Food and War in Mid-Twentieth-Century East Asia* (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), Paul Brassley, Yves Segers, and Leen Van Molle eds., *War, Agriculture, and Food: Rural Europe*
broadening the regional scope of the scholarship on wartime food politics by foregrounding case studies from the Korean homefront during the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War. In terms of analytical framework, this study on the biggest colony of the Japanese empire suggests more serious considerations of colonialism as an essential analytical tool for the studies on wartime food politics. Lastly, as part of an emerging field of Korean food history, this study aims to deepen our understanding of the colonial period under Japanese rule by examining the multilayered meanings of politics over food beyond the narrative focus on the violence of the colonial state for food extraction.3

Although the wartime history of Korea and Japan is often interpreted as a deviation from the universal path to modernity, food politics in wartime Korea was fully integrated into the global trends of the 20th century. During the war years between 1937 and 1945, what came to be known as the “food problem” (singnyang munje; shokuryō mondai in Japanese) concerned a wide array of social actors in both the colony as well as the metropole, who each in their own way, endeavored to seek solutions to the present crisis that affected millions of people across the

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3 In Korean history in general and modern Korean history in particular, food history is still at an early stage, yet an increasing number of scholars have begun to devote attention to the potential of the field. Here is a list of some major scholarly publications. Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, *Cuisine, Colonialism and Cold War: Food in Twentieth-century Korea* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), Dajeong Chung, “Foreign Things No Longer Foreign: How South Koreans Ate U.S. Food” (PhD diss.: Columbia University, 2015), Kyoung-Hee Park, “State and Food in South Korea: Moulding the National Diet in Wartime and Beyond” (PhD diss.: Leiden University, 2013), Yi Ênhui, Solt’ang, kûndae ëi hyôngmyông [Sugar, Modern Revolution] (Seoul: Chisik sanöpsa, 2018), and Chu Yôngha, Sik’t’ak wi ëi Han’gûksa: Menyu ro pon 20-segi Han’guk ëumsik munhwasa [Korean History on the Dining Table: Cultural History of 20th century Korean Cuisine Seen through Menu] (Seoul: Hyumônisît’û, 2013).
When the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in July 1937, Japanese government officials were confident in their overall food supply, in particular, rice, the most valued staple food in the empire. Korean rice gave them reason to be optimistic. A long-standing scholarship on the agriculture in colonial Korea has sufficiently examined how the Japanese empire extracted the wealth of rural Korea for the metropole through a variety of colonial technologies. Since Korea was colonized by Japan in 1910, despite a series of violent struggles, the peninsula had become the biggest rice basket outside of the metropole, followed by its other colony, Taiwan.

To facilitate this designation, from 1910 and 1918, the colonial state conducted a land survey through modern cartographic techniques as well as administrative enforcement. As a consequence, Korean and Japanese landlords, as well as individuals and companies, invested in Korean lands as profitable commodities for rice production. In the wake of a string of rice riots that erupted across major Japanese cities in 1918, the colonial state launched a rice production plan under the rubric of development. Although the correlation between rice yields and the plan’s investment in advanced technology such as irrigation facilities, chemical fertilizer, and new rice crops remain disputed among historians today, official statistics indicate an increase in rice production by about 20 percent. In 1937, rice production reached a historic high, followed by another year of good harvest. To be sure, this increase did not result solely from advanced

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4 Scholars have long debated about the historical meaning of the land survey. See Kim Hongsik et al. eds., Chosŏn t’oji chosa saop ū yŏn’gu [A Study on the Land Survey in Korea] (Seoul: Min’umsa, 1997) and Sin Yongha, Chosŏn t’oji chosa saop yŏn’gu [A Study on the Land Survey in Korea] (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 1982).
7 This comparison is between 2.03 million tons and 2.44 million tons, the average from 1916 to 1920 and the average from 1931 to 1935. The data is from Chosŏn Sotokufu, Chosŏn Sotokufu tōkei nenpō [The Statistics Yearbook of the Government-General of Korea] (Keijō: Chosŏn Sotokufu, 1939).
8 Rice yields in 1937 and in 1938 were 3.75 million tons and 3.47 million tons respectively. These amounts are 53 percent and 42 percent increases from 2.44 million tons of rice yields on average between 1931 and 1935. Chosŏn
technology. Rather, as many Korean scholars, including perhaps the most famous Kim Yongsŏp, have demonstrated, rice production had increased through the workings of an oppressive landlord system. In close cooperation or connivance with the colonial state, Korean and Japanese landlords exploited tenant farmers through disciplinary measures such as extremely high rent, debt, and time management. The absolute majority of the increased rice production was transferred from impoverished tenant farmers to the hands of landlords and, then, to the tables of the metropolitan consumers after a chain of colonial mechanisms from quality-control system to modern ports and tariff system. In the 1930s, 1.15 to 1.44 billion tons of Korean rice a year were shipped to the metropolitan Japan across the Korean Strait. This huge amount accounted for about 10 percent of total rice consumption in metropolitan Japan. By the same token, this amount represented up to 50 percent of the total rice production in Korea. But even the oversupply caused tensions between the metropolitan government and the colonial government over the adverse impact of cheap Korean rice on the metropolitan farmers. As such, up until the summer of 1939, it was overproduction, rather than underproduction, that had come to define the food problem.

Sōtokufu, Chōsen Sōtokufu tōkei nenpō.  
10 For rice trade between Korea and Japan, see Chŏn Kangsu, “Singminji Chosŏn ūi migok chŏngch’aek e kwanhan yŏn’gu: 1930-45 nyŏn ūl chungsim ŭro” [Study on the Rice Policy in Colonial Korea: With a Focus on 1930-45] (PhD. diss., Seoul National University, 1993). Historian Katarzyna J. Cwiertka shows that not only rice but also other agricultural products from Korea such as beef fed Japanese people including soldiers. See Cwiertka, Cuisine, Colonialism and Cold War.
Yet, this optimism was short lived. An unprecedented drought in the summer of 1939 reduced the total rice production in Korea by 40 percent, which, in turn, all but halted Korea’s rice drain to Japan. 11 1939 proved to be thus far the worst year on record, and until the end of the war in 1945, rice production in Korea failed to meet its prior capacity due to frequent droughts and shortage of chemical fertilizer, labor, and other agricultural materials. Much like rice, the production of agricultural products decreased overall during the war. 12 To make situation worse, wartime inflation increased prices of food as well as other commodities. 13 Even without massive-scale famines or starvations in general until the end of war, the “food problem,” as it now came to be called in the official report of the Government-General of Korea (GGK), 14 emerged as an urgent issue across the empire, and remained unresolved until well into the postwar era.

Against this background, this study explores the wartime preoccupations with the complementary notions of productivity (saengsansŏng) and efficiency (nŭngnyul or hyoyul) in Korea. When diverse social actors discussed popular solution to the food problem, the twin pillars of maximum productivity and efficiency translated to the slogans of “increasing food production” (singnyang chŭngsan) and “saving food” (singnyang chŏryak). Soon, these ideas permeated all aspects of food-related activities, and came to be seen as one of the most desirable values to be attained by the Korean population. In terms of production, the food problem came to

11 For more details about the drought and its impact on colonial Korea, see also Higuchi Yūichi, Senjika Chōsen no nōmin seikatsushi, 1939-1945 [Records of Farmers’ Lives in Wartime Korea, 1939-1945] (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 1998), 205-220.
13 Kim Tonguk, “1940-1950 nyŏndaehan’guk ūi in’ülleisyŏn kwa anjŏnghwa chŏngch’aek” [Inflation and Stabilization Policy in Korea during the 1940-50s] (PhD diss., Yonsei University, 1995).
the fore as a question of how to increase the labor productivity of farmers, who made up about 70 percent of the total 24 million population in 1940. Proposed solutions included measures such as cooperative labor organization, mechanization, female labor mobilization, and labor relocation (Chapter 1 & 2). Efficiency was an equally important concern in the issue of food distribution and consumption. In May 1940, with rice and other grains to start, state rationing expanded its scope to all available food resources (Chapter 3). Numerous campaigns exhorted consumers to become more efficient by making the most of all things edible (Chapter 4). Going a step further, gardening campaigns encouraged urbanites to be more than mere consumers to become producers themselves by utilizing every inch of urban land for food production (Chapter 5).

In choosing to examine this wartime obsession through the concept of productivity, this dissertation seeks to move away from ongoing debates over the success or failures of Japanese colonialism. The question of whether Japanese rule enhanced Korean productivity, economy, and ultimately their living condition has polarized scholars of colonial Korea. For instance, scholars have argued over the extent of colonial influence on agricultural output in Korea and, if it had indeed increased productivity, the degree to which living standards of Koreans were bettered in concrete terms such as rice consumption per capita.\(^\text{15}\) It is difficult for the debate to reach a definitive conclusion, in part due to problems inherent in the data set and statistics left by the colonial government. Although the colonial state continuously boasted its statistics on the colony as an essential, rational component of modern mode of governance vis-à-vis the “irrational”

governance of “premodern” Korean government, colonial records such as the official statistics on rice production have empirical and epistemological flaws. Despite their differing views, however, scholars have tended to share the assumption that productivity under colonialism should be evaluated in terms of costs and benefits for the Korean people—a form of analysis that inevitably normalizes the violent nature of colonialism. Yet, accepting productivity and well-being as desirable values risks reproducing the problematic logic of modernization that even colonial rule can be good, insofar it brings material progress and development to the colony.

Instead, this study emphasizes productivity as a modern, colonial value, which became not only synonymous with development and the well-being of the population during wartime, but also accepted as a new norm even by the colonized.

During the war years, the Japanese framed their invasions of China and South East Asia as the imperial discovery of empty lands. This outward expansion of the empire went in tandem with the inward penetration of the empire into the everyday lives of Koreans. Across the peninsula a host of social actors sought to (re)discover and reform hitherto ignored and allegedly unproductive social practices. As each chapter demonstrates, every aspect of Korean daily life,

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from what to eat to even how to masticate became a political matter all for the sake of improved productivity. This intervention transformed the daily life into a site of politics—specifically food politics against the backdrop of total war. To be sure, this was not the first instance of daily food consumption becoming a site of politics in Korea. Even before the war, food-related activities were already politicized. If there was something special about the question of food during the war years, it was the urgency of the period and the extent to which it highlighted food as an object of social intervention for total mobilization.

Food Politics Beyond Totalitarian and Suppressive Power of the State

By examining wartime food politics, this research takes a more expansive approach to power and politics by locating the agency of power beyond the state and understanding its nature as more than simply totalitarian or suppressive. Many works on colonial Korea have tended to overemphasize the impact of state policy in its historical narrative, upholding the long-held assumption that the colonial state was central, if not, the only agency in the peninsula.¹⁹ In terms of its nature, scholars have interpreted the operative power of the colonial state as nothing but totalizing and suppressive, be that for either good or bad. On the one hand, many scholars condemn the draconian state for wartime atrocities against Koreans such as the most notorious violence of forced military sexual slavery.²⁰ On the other hand, some scholars attribute economic development in Korea to the strength and efficiency of the developmentalist state, especially, in

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²⁰ For one of the most recent works on the so-called Comfort Women, see C. Sarah Soh, The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).
contrast to other colonial states in Africa and South East Asia as well as the liberal states of
western countries.\textsuperscript{21} Despite opposing political stances, scholars tend to interpret the period of
total mobilization as a time of absolute state power, which translated to either docile Koreans
living in total silence or risking violent state suppression. In this view, the only exception was a
minority of actors who, on the one end of the spectrum, constituted the “pro-Japanese”
collaborators who willfully accepted the colonial state power, and, on the opposite end, the
socialist or nationalist guerillas who resisted state power \textit{outside} of the Korean peninsula like Manchuria and elsewhere.

It is without doubt that the colonial state played a crucial role in wartime food politics
with its omnipresent and expansive power, but state was neither the only meaningful voice in this
discourse nor did it assume absolute power to proscribe alternative voices. As such, a growing
body of scholarship on the total war regimes of the 20th century has begun stressing the non-
state-centered, non-totalizing, and non-suppressive nature of power. Rather than explaining the
regimes as a purely suppressive force enacting upon the population from above, recent
scholarship presents a more dynamic image of political systems by taking into account the
complicated interactions between diverse social actors, voices, and desires. Such an approach
sheds light on not only the contours of suppression and confrontation but also provide a more
nuanced picture of this relationship in terms of resonance, appropriation, negotiation, and
reluctance.\textsuperscript{22} Jun Uchida’s study on Japanese settlers in Korea, for instance, examines their role

\textsuperscript{21} For instance, see Atul Kohli, “Where Do High Growth Political Economies Come From? The Japanese Lineage of
\textsuperscript{22} For instance, David Crowley and Susan E. Reid eds., \textit{Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern
Bloc} (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, Fabrice d’Almeida eds.,
\textit{Pleasures and Power in Nazi Germany} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), and Louise Young, \textit{Japan’s Total
Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism} (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998),
and Andre Schmid, “Historicizing North Korea: State Socialism, Population Mobility, and Cold War
as “brokers of empire,” who mediated the maintenance and expansion of the empire while pursuing their own interests and ambitions. As Uchida shows, the settlers were hardly passive toward state policy but instead, actively participated in the colonial project, blurring the line between the state and society.\textsuperscript{23} Janet Poole’s research on late colonial Korea also demonstrates that voices of intellectuals were neither completely unified nor totally diminished even during the wartime, commonly referred to as “the dark period.” Rather, imaginative and creative voices that defy clear-cut categorizations like pro-Japanese still existed.\textsuperscript{24} Building on such scholarship, this study approaches food politics in wartime Korea as a dynamic discourse involving a wide array of voices, interests, and desires.

In order to capture all the varied opinions and motivations that constitute food politics at this time, this study pays special attention to those who can be grouped as experts, from agronomists (Chapter 1 & 2) and nutrition scientists (Chapter 3), to home economists, cooking specialists (Chapter 4) and horticulture specialists (Chapter 5). Differences in approach, field, and ethnicity notwithstanding, what unites them as a group was their concerted effort and commitment to the knowledge production concerning the Korean population and their food. During the war years, these experts visited both urban and rural parts of the peninsula to create specific forms of knowledge about popular food production and consumption, and their findings manifested in various forms including nutritional surveys, ethnographies, cookbooks, and gardening manuals. Until now, most of these materials have been largely ignored in Korean historiography or at best, examined only as empirical data sets. Rather than accepting this


\textsuperscript{24} Janet Poole, \textit{When the Future Disappears: The Modernist Imagination in Late Colonial Korea} (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
archive as objective knowledge, the present study will attend to these sources as products of
highly political discourses constituting wartime food politics.

In examining these sources, this project underscores the ways in which wartime material
focus on maximum productivity under the rubric of total mobilization converged with competing
opinions on political, social, and cultural issues in rapidly changing wartime Korea. More
specifically, this research focuses on three recurring and intertwined questions in wartime food
politics: first, how to reposition the colony and its population in the empire; second, how to
bridge the geographical gap between city and countryside in the Korean peninsula; and finally,
how to shape ideal gender roles in the domestic space. By attending to these questions through
the lens of race, region, class, and gender, this study aims to trace a range of varied and, at times,
competing social aspirations during this period. At first glance, as many studies on wartime
Korea point out, the desire of the empire in their demand for mobilization of the colonial
population for war efforts seemed to overwhelm other social aspirations. Yet, attentive readings
will reveal that there existed a range of ambitions and desires, and an equally diverse set of
interpretations of what this better life may entail. At times, the reader will find that Korean and
Japanese elites espoused a modernist vision to improve the diet and health of the Korean
population. The reader will also find anti-modern—yet still modernist—agrarian imaginations
that envisioned the city as a wholesome space replete with urban gardens. Simultaneously, the
reader will discover middle-class desire for ideal bourgeois subjectivity and domesticity betrayed
in discussions about efficient consumption. Despite the wartime fascist fantasy of harmonious
co-existence of differences under the banner of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, as each
chapter demonstrates, the different social aspirations and visions of each actors, in fact, created
more tensions, dilemmas, and contradictions, threatening to fracture the totalizing image of the
empire.
Improving the Colonial Population through State Intervention

First, wartime food politics for productivity was entangled with racial politics over issues of population management and repositioning of Korea within the Japanese empire. At the core of racial politics lies the colonial concept of assimilation ( tonghwa or dōka in Japanese). Much scholarship has emphasized assimilation as a specific character of Japanese racial policy, which stressed the geographical, racial, and cultural proximity or sameness between Koreans and Japanese. In the eyes of government officials and apologists, this assimilationist approach has been touted as a “benevolent” feature of Japanese colonialism in its efforts to abolish inequalities between Koreans and Japanese.\(^\text{25}\) By contrast, Korean nationalists have interpreted Japanese assimilation policy as a deceptive ploy, which ultimately aimed to annihilate the Korean nation ( minjok malssal or minzoku massatsu in Japanese).\(^\text{26}\) Despite these contradictory interpretations, both share a view of the wartime period as the final stage in the linear development of assimilationist policy. From the perspective of the former, the empire had finally achieved its equality through the slogans of “Naesŏn ilch’e/Naisen ittai” (Korea and Japan as one body) and “Imperialization” ( Hwangminhwa or Kōminka). In the view of the latter, the inhuman efforts of the empire reached its climax in its complete erasure of a Korean national identity. Postcolonial scholarship attending to the racial politics of empires generally offers a more nuanced picture of the situation, demonstrating the limited analytical value of such simple binary of homogenization.


\(^{26}\) Ch’oe Yuri, Iliche malgi singminji chibae chŏngch’aek yŏn’gu [Study on the Policy of Colonial Rule in the Late Colonial Period] (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 1997). Mark Caprio’s work traces these two opposing attitudes. See Caprio, Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945.
and difference. To varying degrees, all colonial powers endeavored to demarcate clear boundaries between the colonized and the colonizer. Yet, the lines were always fluid and unstable so much so that continuous redrawing was needed over the issue of who should be included or excluded. Wartime food politics in Korea, too, raised the question of how to manage the largest colony and its population in the empire.

When we parse the unrelenting praise for productivity, it becomes clear that experts, especially those in the first three chapters, categorized Korean behavior and customs in food production and consumption in binary terms: it was either productive and efficient, or unproductive and inefficient. Given the fact that food is usually considered as a reservoir of ethnic, national, or racial identity, it does not come as a surprise that wartime studies of Korean food production and consumption yielded the notion of difference. When such conceptualization of identity converged with the idea of productivity, discussion about Korean particularity regarding food easily veered off into a matter of colonial backwardness or inferiority. Wartime nutrition studies readily explained Korean people’s distinctive dietary patterns as evidence of ignorance and inefficiency resulting from Korea’s backward history. Such an assessment was hardly novel. Throughout the colonial period, the colonialist view of seeing Koreans as inherently lower in the developmental order or mindo became the rationale for limiting Korean participation in public affairs of government, education, and economy.

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wartime experts, the main interlocutors in this study, reframed their racist opinions of Koreans through the universal language of science. Irrespective of their ethnic identity, Korean and Japanese experts both invoked scientific, neutral, and objective categories, such as calorie consumption and protein intake, to make their findings “universally” applicable beyond the boundary of the empire. Once they could measure and compare their “objective” findings with other global cases, the experts justified ascribing a “low” status to the Korean ethnicity on “scientific” grounds, which only strengthened stereotypical images of Koreans as backward and inferior.

Scientific pronouncement of unproductivity further legitimized the unequal treatment of Koreans through such means as low wage system and inferior food quality, but at the same time the colonial population was not excluded entirely. Rather, Koreans were incorporated into the wartime biopolitical regime of the empire.\(^{30}\) For instance, the assimilationist view of Koreans and Japanese as belonging to the same race vis-à-vis the white race led to the conclusion that Koreans needed the equivalent amount of calories and proteins as their Japanese counterpart—although claims for Korean distinction justified the distribution of higher portion of “inferior” grains. As each chapter will show, experts viewed Korean “backwardness” as a conditional problem that could and should be improved through social intervention not only for the warfare of the empire but also for the welfare of the Korean population.

According to Foucault, welfare measures work as mechanisms of biopower to maintain security. This is done by regularizing and regulating the aleatory and contingent character of the

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\(^{30}\) This issue of inclusion and exclusion is the major theme of Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
population at the mass level. When we combine Foucault’s analysis with Marxist critique, welfare can be seen an essential tool for reproducing “living labor” and making it controllable through biopower. When labor shortage occurred in almost every sector of the expanding war economy in Korea as well as in Japan, wartime mobilization relied on not only coercive modes of disciplinary power but also more positive modes of power whose objective was to “make live” the population by ensuring their welfare through adequate nutrition, housing, education, and recreation. Wartime is generally conceived in terms of violence and coercion, yet equally important were other types of mobilization without which the war itself would not have been possible. As scholars like Foucault, Bauman, and Agamben have claimed, biopolitics and necropolitics are two faces of the same field of modern power. This is especially true for total war regimes that seek to make a population live for the sole purpose of redirecting the subjects into the circuit of killing in the battlefield.

To be sure, wartime considerations for the welfare of Koreans was nothing novel, and the Korean population was never completely segregated outside biopolitical power prior to the outbreak of the war. Social welfare programs had already existed in Korea under the heading of social work (sahoe saŏp or shakai jigyō in Japanese), but with state revenue in short supply, their scope was limited to only the most vulnerable social groups like orphans, the blind, natural

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disaster victims, and leprosy patients. Despite having to reckon with longstanding limitations, the wartime colonial state not only increased budgets for social programs but also changed their very nature. Rather than reserving resources for temporary relief for only the most destitute of social groups, wartime social welfare became not only more systematized and permanent, but also expanded the scope of welfare to the general population. For instance, the 1938 announcement of “universal” elementary education for Koreans was a watershed moment, whereupon the Japanese empire included the colonial population as an essential part of the empire. The pinnacle of such systematic change can be found in the Bureau of Health and Welfare (Husaengguk or Kōseikyoku in Japanese). Established by the Government-General of Korea in November 1941, this unified bureau managed the welfare of the entire colonial population.35

To be sure, my attention to the integration of Koreans into the welfare regime should not be confused with arguments of Japanese apologists who insist that colonial rule was beneficial to the well-being of the Korean population or, at the very least, that Japanese officials had genuine intentions that failed due to wartime constraints. Without a doubt, the total mobilization of Koreans was as violent as wartime atrocities such as forced military sexual slavery. In food production as in consumption, too, the violence of the colonial state aimed at extracting maximum resources from the Korean peninsula are well-researched by academic works on wartime state policies on agriculture and food. This scholarship correctly point out that the colonial state frequently resorted to violent measures. This took the form of increasing labor discipline in food production, mandatory food collection (kongch’ul), and strict food rationing.36

With existing scholarship in mind, this study aims to deepen our understanding of wartime

35 Chapter 1 of Fujitani, Race for Empire.
36 For instance, see Cwiertka, Cuisine, Colonialism and Cold War, Yi Songsun, Ilche ha chōnsi nongōp chōngch’aek kwa nongch’on kyŏngje, and Higuchi, Senjika Chōsen no nōmin seikatsushi, 1939-1945.
extraction by showing that it was enacted through a combination of violence and welfare measures such as school lunch programs, which will be examined in Chapter 3.

To critical approach welfare as a modern mode of governmentality offers us a chance to reconsider the issue of “conversion” (chŏnhyang) and, in particular, the elusive category of “pro-Japanese collaboration” (ch’innil).\(^{37}\) To varying degrees, the reputation of almost all experts in this research was tainted as pro-Japanese collaborators in postcolonial Korea. This study traces their aspirations to form new social and historical system for the wellbeing of Koreans as a crucial factor for their involvement in wartime state mobilization. To be more specific, this dissertation stresses how Korean intellectuals anticipated the global turn toward the welfare state to also benefit Koreans. Since the Great Depression, countries around the world expanded the welfare state apparatuses, in the hopes that the augmented power of the state would curb rising unemployment rates, poverty, and social unrest and, ultimately, achieve economic and social security. Even in the Japanese empire, welfare management of the population through social services was expanded with the belief that the welfare state could remedy the social problems in the 1930s.\(^{38}\) Located in this global current, intellectuals working in the peninsula also found it necessary to eschew laissez faire capitalism and transform the empire into an interventionist state that would actively intercede in the everyday life of Koreans under the pretense of improving not only productivity but also the welfare of the colonial population.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{38}\) In the case of Japan, see Gregory J. Kasza, *One World of Welfare: Japan in Comparative Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006). In relation to the relationship between food politics and the welfare state, see Vernon, *Hunger and Mosby, Food Will Win the War*.

In Chŏngsik, the central figure examined in Chapter 1 and 2, is an exemplar of such intellectuals, whose political vision changed dramatically from a nationalist Marxist agronomist to a passionate supporter of wartime mobilization. As an ardent believer in the linear historical development, In devoted his life to dismantling the feudal landlord system in Korea, which he noted as the root cause for all the social problems in the countryside including low productivity, rampant poverty, and cultural backwardness. He proposed to replace the feudal system with mechanized and cooperative farming, an advanced stage of agricultural production system that, he claimed, Korean society needed in order to not only boost labor productivity but also improve their livelihood. For In, the wartime colonial state’s penetration into the Korean countryside for the purpose of increased food production was not necessarily exploitative. Rather, he accepted the state’s expanded reach as part and parcel of the state’s rationale for systematic planning and social intervention that promised to bring advance social system to the countryside. He even welcomed the much-dreaded “universal” conscription of Koreans into the imperial army, for he saw it as a harbinger of “universal” education, which he found most crucial for the improvement of Koreans. Welfare and militarization were not antithetical but two sides of the same modern state. But many wartime intellectuals like In overlooked this double nature of modern power. Instead, they accepted productivity and welfare as desirable values for historical progress even if it meant the intervention of the colonial state.

Chapter 2 focuses on how such expectations for the welfare state to improve the livelihood of Koreans manifested in wartime relocation of a specific group of the rural population, slash-and-burn farmers. Long been considered as a symbol of poverty in Korea, the

destitute farmers was one of the main targets of government intervention throughout the colonial period, but the onset of war added urgency to rediscover the farmers as potential labors for the wartime economy, in particular, for the development of the northern regions of the Korean peninsula. By attributing inadequate productivity as the main factor for their impoverishment, the state and other social actors enjoined the slash-and-burn farmers to support wartime relocation and development as a way to improve their productive output and, in turn, enhance their living standards. Against this historical background, Chapter 2 analyzes three specific texts on the farmers, written by three Korean intellectuals. Despite the differences in each representation of the subaltern group, they viewed the farmers with the same benevolent gaze of the state and the will for improvement.

Chapter 3 examines similar ways in which the will of the state was mediated through nutrition scientists who pursued dietary patterns of Korean population as an important step toward ensuring efficient food consumption and improvements in Korean health. While Korean intellectuals were the subject of Chapters 1 and 2, Chapter 3 expands the scope of this research to include Japanese experts such as Takai Toshio at Keijō [Seoul] Imperial University and Hirokawa Kosaburō at Keijō Medical School. Studies on food and nutrition worked as a scientific discourse to further differentiate Koreans in terms of food consumption, from miscellaneous grains to kimchi. Not surprisingly, such studies defined dietary habits of Koreans, and the rural population in particular, as a scientifically proven social problem that revealed Korean backwardness in the evolutionary order. But at the same time, like In Chŏngsik, these Japanese nutrition experts also called for a more expansive role of the state, believing state involvement, through policies such as school lunch programs, as the most efficient technology to fix the Korean diet and improve upon it.
Developing the Country and Ruralizing the City

The manifest determination to improve the quality of life for the Korean population converged with the concurrent reformist discourse on the country and the city. As such, the topological imagination of the urban and the rural as a binary pair was another recurring topic in food politics. Recent scholarship on colonial Korea has examined urbanization and modern capitalist consumer culture that have thrived in burgeoning urban facilities such as department stores, cinemas, cafes, and dance halls.\textsuperscript{40} Indeed, the scope and rate of urbanization in Korea rightly deserves scholarly attention. Although the rural population still comprised the majority of the Korean population, the urban population continued to grow from the 1920s onwards, from 4.8 percent of the total population in 1920 to 14.9 in 1930, and 27.8 in 1940.\textsuperscript{41} The colonial capital city, Kyŏngsŏng [Seoul], had been transformed into one of the largest cities in the Japanese empire by the early 1940s, wherein a population of one million, including 150,000 Japanese settlers from the metropole, enjoyed modern capitalist infrastructures and culture.\textsuperscript{42} Yet, the existing scholarship on urban Korea has tended to overemphasize the urban at the expense of overlooking its rural counterpart. Such a skewed view risks reproducing the problem of spatially

\textsuperscript{40} The pioneering work is Kim Chinsong, \textit{Sŏul e transū hol ἀl hōhara: hyŏndaesŏng ūi yŏn’gu} [Allow Dance Halls in Seoul: Study of Modernity] (Seoul: Hyŏnsil munhwa yŏn’gu, 1999).

\textsuperscript{41} Son Chŏngmok, \textit{Ilche kangjŏngi tosihwa kwaǰŏng} [Study on Urbanization during the Japanese Occupation] (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1996), 293.

\textsuperscript{42} There are a number of scholarship on urbanization in colonial Korea including Son, \textit{Ilche kangjŏngi tosihwa kwaǰŏng}. For recent scholarship on urbanization of Seoul, see Kim Paegyŏng, \textit{Chibae wa konggan: singminji tosi Kyŏngsŏng kwa cheguk Ilbon} [Rule and Space: Colonial City Seoul and Imperial Japan] (Seoul: munhak kwa chisŏngsa, 2009), Yŏm Pokkyu, \textit{Sŏul ū kwŏn kyŏngsŏng ū t’ansaeng: 1910-1945 tosi kyehoek ūro pon kyŏngsŏng ū yŏksa} [The Origin of Seoul, the Birth of Kyŏngsŏng: The History of Kyŏngsŏng Seen through the Urban Planning, 1910-1945] (Seoul: Idea, 2016), and Henry, \textit{Assimilating Seoul}. The data of the Japanese settlers in Seoul is from Uchida, \textit{Brokers of Empire}, 65. In 1940, 56.8 per cent of 689,790 Japanese settlers in Korea resided in the city.
categorizing modern progress. This research problematizes similar modernist views held by the colonial elites who interpreted the city as the only locus of modernity and development vis-à-vis the countryside as a symbol of premodernity and backwardness. Seeing the world in such hierarchical terms, wartime intellectuals dreamt of counterbalancing the disparity between the two geographical entities by elevating the countryside to the level of the city through development. The first three chapters examine the different ways and sites in which this modernist project took shape, such as the industrial labor system and mechanization (Chapter 1), planned labor relocation (Chapter 2), and school lunch programs (Chapter 3).

At the same time, this study also pays attention to the counter-discourse of the anti-urbanism that was flourishing in among the anti-modernist intellectuals, who sought to reverse the standard hierarchy between the city and the country. Not surprisingly, rapid urbanization engendered a range of urban problems, from air pollution and poor transportation, to insufficient sewage system and unhygienic foods. Korean intellectuals, who were in line with globally circulated anti-modern—yet still very much modernist—agrarian ideals, viewed the countryside as an immune space unsullied by all the social ills of the urban centers. For many intellectuals involved in food politics, the city was seen as a morally “unproductive” space of consumption fraught with the social malaise of modern capitalism like corruption, idleness, and decadence. On the contrary, the countryside, in their imagination, was a morally “productive” space in which production took place by naive but vital and energetic farmers. This contrasting interpretation of

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43 Few exceptions are Matsumoto Takenori, Chōsen nōson no ‘Shokuminchi kindai’ keiken and Yi, Ilche ha chōnsi nongp chōngch’aek kwa nongch’on kyŏngje, and Park, Building a Heaven on Earth, but these works also tend to approach the urban and the rural as independent entities. Raymond Williams’ canonical book, The Country and the City (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) and William Cronon’s another groundbreaking work, Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991) criticize this separatist approach.

44 For some global cases of agrarianism, see Tiago Saraiva, Fascist Pigs: Technoscientific Organisms and the History of Fascism (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016), Williams, The Country and the City, Young, Japan’s Total Empire, and Park, Two Dreams in One Bed.
the rural and the urban shaped the vision behind the eminent literary critic Im Hwa’s call for “the ruralization of the urban” as a new way of healthy life.\textsuperscript{45} To realize this lifestyle, intellectuals made frequent visits or even relocated to the countryside with the aim of reconnecting with the land and its people, discovering the value of labor and production, and ultimately transforming themselves into a productive subject.\textsuperscript{46} For those bound to the city, intellectuals imagined building a rural space within the urban fabric by introducing modest meals of peasant farmers composed of wild plants and less-polished grains to the tables of urban consumers (Chapter 4) and even encouraging them to grow foods in their own backyards (Chapter 5).

While agrarianism has been praised as a sincere effort toward an alternative system,\textsuperscript{47} scholars have correctly pointed out that agrarian ambition to overcome capitalist agriculture and realize harmonious rural society in the modern world often moved in the same direction of imperialist expansion in the 20th century.\textsuperscript{48} A close reading of the writer, Yi Kiyŏng’s urban gardening experience in Chapter 5 aptly illustrates how an agrarian intellectual’s dream of rurality readily resonated with wartime expansion of power to the domestic space in the Korean peninsula. During the war, the so-called one-p’yŏng (3.3 square meters) farm campaign (\textit{ilp’yŏng nongwŏn undong}) demanded urban consumers to become better imperial subject by not only consuming food efficiently but also producing their own food. By condemning all things “idle”—like land, time, and labor—in the city, the campaign enjoined urban consumers to emulate productive peasant farmers by growing plants and animals in their allegedly

\textsuperscript{45} Im Hwa, “Ilbon nongmin munhak ūi tonghyang: t’ŭkhi t’o ūi munhak āl chungsim ūro” [The Trend in Peasant Literature in Japan: With a Focus on the Literature of Soil], \textit{Inmun p’yŏngnon} 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1940), 13.

\textsuperscript{46} For the narrative of rebirth in late colonial Korea, see Kim Yerim, “1930 nyŏndae huban mollak/chaesaeing ūi sŏsa wa múisik yŏn’gu” [Aesthetic Consciousness and Narratives of Fall/Rebirth in the late 1930s] (PhD diss., Yonsei University, 2002).

\textsuperscript{47} For instance, see Park, \textit{Building a Heaven on Earth}.

\textsuperscript{48} Saraiva, \textit{Fascist Pigs, Young, Japan’s Total Empire}, and Park, \textit{Two Dreams in One Bed}. 
unproductive backyards. Chapter 5 will show how this imperial mobilization of every subject and kind of space in the Korean peninsula befit Yi’s agrarian aspirations to become a productive rural subject in his own urban domestic garden.

Articulating Middle-Class Ideals about Gender, Domesticity, and Beyond

This expansion of power to both rural and urban space was neither gender-neutral nor class-neutral. If the countryside was the frontier for Korean elite intellectuals, mainly men, to imagine their ideal subjectivity vis-à-vis the rural population, domestic space was another locus for the male elites to project their ideals for improvement onto women as a new target of involvement. Globally circulated in the 19th and 20th century, the idea of domesticity defined the home as a space for women vis-à-vis the public realm of men.49 In Korea, too, the bourgeois ideology, in conflation with more conventional Confucian ideology, had defined the home as a feminine space prior to war.50 It is not surprising, then, that during the wartime food politics developed upon the idea of assigning the homefront to women and reserving the battlefield as a place for male soldiers in direct combat with the enemy. To be sure, this gendered ideal was always blurred due to increased female participation outside the home in the general workforce. Like many other contemporary wartime countries, women’s role as paid laborers in Korea also expanded in service and industrial sectors to meet the demands of a booming wartime


50 See, for instance, Kim Hyegeyŏng, *Singminji ha kündae kajok ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chendŏ* [The Making of Modern Family and Gender under Colonial Rule] (Seoul: Ch’angbi, 2006).
In food production, too, more and more female laborers replaced or supplemented young male farmers who were leaving the countryside to partake in the wartime economy in varying ways, as industrial workers, temporary day-workers, or civilians in military camps. Nevertheless, as Chapter 4 demonstrate, wartime gender ideology in what I call dietary advice literature such as cookbooks still presented housewives as the central figure of the home, responsible for the management of domestic food consumption. In stressing housewives’ duty in food consumption, elite writers of dietary advice, irrespective of gender, implored housewives to become better imperial subjects by economizing every available food resource in a rational, scientific, and efficient manner.

However, the middle-class aspirations for women embedded in the dietary advice literature complicate the interpretation of the wartime as a time of mere suppression of any desires unrelated to the war, for it betrays a dynamic interaction among multiple desires. Korea was an impoverished colony with only a small portion of the population that could be categorized as members of the middle-class or bourgeoisie, and yet discourse on domestic food consumption and production embodied class norms of a respectable middle-class bourgeois female subject and her family. Careful reading of wartime discourse on domestic food consumption will show that beneath the militant rhetoric of rational food consumption lay middle-class aspirations for an enviable life signified by a healthy and nutritious diet. Especially, as Chapter 4 shows, considerations for taste and social distinction persisted even during the wartime. Furthermore, wartime discourse revealed gendered aspirations for a globally circulated female bourgeois subjectivity, which conjured up an image of a so-called “scientific housewife” who would manage her kitchen and domestic space with scientific knowledge. Rather than

simply suppress middle-class longings for a better life and self-identity, this study stresses that wartime discourse on middle-class domesticity promised the lifestyle of an ideal bourgeois subject even under wartime conditions.

Equally important for wartime mobilization with respect to the domestic space was masculinity. In countries at war like Korea, soldiers in combat shaped the highest ideal masculine subjectivity. Although approximately 20,000 Koreans went to the battlefield as “volunteer” soldiers, not every Korean man was eligible to enlist in the imperial army until the Japanese government implemented universal conscription of Koreans in 1944.\(^{52}\) Wartime ideology insisted that Korean men staying behind on the homefront would still get a chance to cultivate a militarized masculine subjectivity, albeit as non-soldiers, if they could positively contribute to war efforts through their labor power. Especially, wartime gardening discourse as discussed in Chapter 5 demanded Korean men to fulfill their duty as imperial male subjects in the domestic sphere by producing food for the empire. But at the same time, urban gardening discourses also embraced class aspirations to form ideal masculine subjectivity in the domestic setting by perpetuating middle-class values from fitness and rationality, to diligence and attentiveness.

Yet, for the middle-class, aspirations for a better life proved to be a tall order during the time of war. While the dietary advice literature and the gardening discourse both held out the promise for attaining middle-class subjectivities and values in the bourgeois domestic space, this study demonstrates that beneath the rhetoric and image lay deep seated anxieties of the middle-class for failing to achieve ideal subjectivity and lifestyle due to not only wartime conditions but also inherent contradictions in modernity. In Chapter 4, we will find that middle-class

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\(^{52}\) For more details about voluntary soldiers and universal draft, see Chapter 1 of Fujitani, *Race for Empire.*
housewives’ desires for independence in their kitchens as sole proprietors coexisted with concerns about losing their comfortable life that had been maintained by the labor of lower-class housemaids. In a similar manner, Chapter 5 will examine the story of a male bourgeois gardener who couldn’t even feed his family let alone become an ideal masculine subject. No matter how minute or trivial these examples may seem, each case betrays dilemmas and contractions embedded in the wartime rhetoric of a better life to come.

A Note on Chapter Organization

This research does not aim to provide a comprehensive history of wartime food politics that have been outlined above. Rather, it provides five independent scenes, which, as an aggregate, paint a picture of the time. The reader does not have to follow the chapter order presented in the dissertation; the reader can begin from any chapter that piques their interest. Yet, the author’s suggestion is to follow the current order, which is organized according to the circular motion from production to consumption, then, back to production. The first two chapters of this study explore how farmers became the target of wartime social intervention to increase output in food production. Chapter 1 examines wartime discussions of corporatization and mechanization as a new approach to achieve agricultural productivity. Corporatization and mechanization meant a spatial re-assemblage of farmers to other farmers and machines at the village level. Another spatial solution to the problem was to relocate farmers across regions and industries. As such, Chapter 2 focuses on wartime relocation of a specific group of the rural population, slash-and-burn farmers in remote valleys. Then, Chapter 3 to 5 move into the realm of consumption, yet these chapters do not approach consumption as an independent category but as a corelated term with production. Chapter 3 examines the efforts of nutrition scientists who studied the food
consumption patterns of Koreans as a first-step toward maximum efficiency in food consumption for producing labor power for the war economy. Chapter 4 examines how more popular forms of materials on Korean diets such as cookbooks reflected wartime desires to produce efficient diets and food consumers. Chapter 5 returns to the issues of food production by investigating the urban gardening discourse with a focus on how the discourse rendered urban consumers as food producers who should produce their own foods in domestic space in emulation of farmers in the countryside.
Chapter 1
Ensuring Productivity and Welfare: Rural Restructuring on the Korean Homefront

In 1943 when the Japanese empire was in the midst of the Pacific War, the eminent agricultural economist, In Chŏngsik, defined the mission of the colony and its population as follows:

The biggest task facing the agricultural sector in wartime Korea is increasing production of agricultural products, which is especially true for rice production. Even with the incorporation of rice-producing countries of South East Asia into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere today, Korean agriculture remains crucial for resolving the food problem of the empire. The balance of food supplies for the whole empire depends on Korean agriculture and the countryside. … The 17 million Korean farmers should overcome difficulties and adverse conditions to successfully achieve this national mission.¹

In essence, this statement aptly captures the central question of this research. As the so-called “food problem” emerged as one of the most urgent issues in the Korean peninsula during the war, various social actors discussed and debated different ways to increase food production. As such, in addition to the farmers in the countryside, everyday food-related activities of the rural population, who made up roughly 70 percent of the population, also became a target of wartime food politics. In Chŏngsik was one of the visionaries behind this wartime mission to expand the productivity of the rural population toward the cause. Distressed by “the [absolute] quantitative decrease in agricultural labor and its qualitative deterioration,”² he claimed that the only way to increase food production was to “raise labor efficiency (nōritsu in Japanese; nŭngnyul in Korean) and expand the production capacity (sensanryoku in Japanese; saengsannyŏk in Korean) of labor

² In, “Preface,” Chŏsen nōson saihensei no kenkyū, 2.
power per unit.”3 To In, efficiency above all became the operative value for ensuring success of the war.

As we can see from In Chŏngsik’s discussions, wartime food politics was foremost a politics centering on how to improve productivity in agriculture, in particular, labor efficiency of the rural population. Yet, wartime food politics was not a sheer material issue of producing foodstuff or increasing labor efficiency. Rather, this chapter argues that the material issue of food production dovetailed with renewed questions of Korea’s positionality and formation of imperial subjectivity in the time of total war when the empire mobilized the largest colonial population for war. Certainly, there were many other intellectuals in Korea who also paid keen attention to the status of Koreans and the strategic role the peninsula would play within the empire during wartimes, yet the significance of In’s study lies in his understanding about the relationship between Korea and Japan from his lifelong interest in the socio-economic aspects of agriculture, the countryside, and also the rural population. Moreover, although he is classified as an agronomist in a strict sense, his focus was so capacious that he drew connections between his rural interest to other broader wartime political, social, and cultural discussions, ranging from citizenship and conscription, to education and gender. For these reasons, In’s writing provides not only valuable information about the material conditions of agricultural production in Korea but it is also a window into the complicated and multifaceted nature of wartime food politics in Korea.

By examining In Chŏngsik as a central figure, this chapter traces In’s dramatic change from a nationalist cum socialist to a state ideologue who advocated wartime mobilization, albeit with a focus on the colonial elite’s social aspirations to improve Koreans’ lives within the

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3 In, “Preface,” Chōsen nōson saiensei no kenkyū, 3-4.
empire. It was 1920s, during his formative years in Tokyo as a student at Hōsei University that In, an intellectual from a wealthy family, accepted socialism as a strategy to transform what he saw as a feudal, undeveloped, agricultural colony into a wealthy industrial nation. As a nationalist Marxist, In had fiercely accused Japanese imperialism for developing the metropole at the expense of leaving Korea undeveloped and in perpetual feudality. However, in the midst of war, he shifted course and became a state ideologue advocating the empire and wartime mobilization as the only viable path for development in Korea. This chapter argues that In’s abrupt shift in politics resulted from a developmentalist intellectual’s hope for the state to be the most rational and efficient social engineering entity to ensure development to the colonial population. Based on his observation of state-led economic development in Korea propelled by the war, In began to see the colonial state not as a brutal foreign exploiter but as a capable developer to overcome all the social ills in Korea, including the enduring feudal landlord system, and eventually beckon progress and happiness to all Koreans. To In, participation in wartime food production under the banner of Naisen ittai (Japan and Korea as one body) or Kōminka (Imperialization) was neither treacherous nor exploitative, like sacrificing the lives of fellow Koreans on the battlefront. Rather, he firmly held the belief that a membership in the expanding empire through wartime mobilization would ensure a progressive social intervention, which would, in Michel Foucault’s terms, make live Koreans in a prosperous empire.

4 For more details on his life and the list of his writings, see Yi Suil, “In Chŏngsik sónsaeng ūi saengae wa nongŏp kyŏngje sasang,” in In Chŏngsik, In Chŏngsik chŏnjip Vol. 1, ed., In Chŏngsik chônjip kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Hanul ak’ademi, 1992) and Chapter 3 of Matsumoto Takenori, Chōsen nōson no ‘Shokuminchi kindai’ keiken [The Experience of ‘Colonial Modernity’ in the Korean Countryside] (Tokyo: Shakai hyōronsha, 2005), 5-14.
5 My interpretation of In’s inner logic greatly owes to Chang Yonggyŏng, “Ilche singminjigi In Chŏngsik ūi chŏnyangnon: NaeSŏn ilch’er on ūl t’onghan singminjŏk kwan’gye ū hyŏngsŏng kwa nongŏp chaep’yŏnsŏngnon” [In Chŏngsik’s Idea of Conversion in the Japanese Colonial Period: Theory on Restructuring of Colonial Relationship and Agriculture through NaeSŏn ilch’e], Han’gukōaron 49 (June 2003): 231-290.
Overcoming Feudalism in the Countryside

In Chŏngsik’s lifelong interest in the countryside and the rural economy was instigated by the global rural crisis of the early 20th century that was deeply felt on the Korean peninsula. Much of the academic work on the countryside in the 1930s has presented the region and its population in a state of poverty and social turmoil. To summarize previous scholarship on this topic, the 1920s was a prosperous period for landlords who benefited from the booming rural economy. Once the land survey, launched in 1910 and completed in 1918, established private property right as the “universal” law of modern economy, land became a commodity in Korea, not just alienable but also profitable.6 Seeking profit, landlords, Korean and Japanese alike, invested in land to produce rice for the metropolitan market. The state was also interested in rice production in Korea as the biggest rice granary outside the Japanese archipelago, followed by Taiwan. Especially in the wake of the rice riots in 1918 in the metropole, the metropolitan and colonial states demonstrated keen interest in increasing rice production in the Korean peninsula, in particular, the rice paddy areas of the southern provinces. Under the heading of Plan for the Increase of Rice Production, launched in 1920, the colonial government subsidized irrigation projects during the 1920s and into the early 1930s.7 By lifting the tariff barrier between the colony and the metropole, the colonial and metropolitan governments also paved the way for landlords to prosper as rice could flow more smoothly from the peninsula to Japan. In the 1930s, approximately 8-10 million sŏk (1.15 to 1.44 billion tons) of Korean rice was shipped to the metropole, accounting for 10 to 15

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percent of total rice consumption in Japan. By the same token, this amount represented 30 to 50 percent of total rice production in Korea and 40 to 50 percent of total exports to Japan. Owing to this booming rice economy, landlords accumulated wealth and consolidated their social status in the colonial landlord system.

Prosperous times—for landlords—however, were short-lived, for the gargantuan impact of the Great Depression hardly spared Korea in its wake. As crash in rice prices in the global market as well as in the Japanese market threatened profits, landlords attempted to offset their loss by extorting agricultural surplus from tenant farmers. The official statistics recorded that the number of tenant farmers, which was already significant even before colonization, increased drastically with the ratio of tenant farmers exceeding 50 percent of the total rural population, from 43.2 percent in 1925 to 51.9 percent in 1934. This economic upheaval invariably led to notable social changes in the countryside. Some tenant farmers abandoned their home in search of new lands or jobs in Manchuria and Japan. By 1935, the number of overseas Koreans exceeded 1.5 million. Some farmers raised their voices by organizing radical associations and asserting their tenant rights. From 1920 to 1932, 4,804 disputes occurred between 74,581

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8 For rice trade in agriculture between colony and metropole, see Chŏn Kangsu, “Singminji Chosŏn ŭi migok chŏngch’ae k e kwanhan yŏn’gu: 1930-45 nyŏn ŭl chungsim ŭro” [Study on the Rice Policy in Colonial Korea: With a Focus on 1930-45] (PhD. diss., Seoul National University, 1993).


10 Chŏsen sŏtokufu tŏkai nenpō. Recited from Song Kyujin et al., T’onggye ro pon Han’guk kŭnhyŏndaesa [Modern Korean History Seen from Statistics] (Seoul: Ayŏn ch’ulp’anbu, 2003), 144.


tenants and landlords. As a result, rural society as a whole was utterly destabilized and politicized.

The political and economic instability in rural Korea captured the attention of many critics who understood the countryside and its population as one of the most urgent social problems that needed to be clearly interpreted and quickly resolved. As Albert Park’s recent book examines, diverse actors in Korea, ranging from government officials and journalists to religious groups and social reformers, paid acute attention to the so-called rural problem (*nongch’on munje*). One of them was In Chŏngsik whose Marxist approach diversified the discussion on rural poverty in Korea. In many ways, In was not unlike his contemporaries for he, too, reacted emotionally to what he described as the “sorrow” (*piae*) and “suffering” (*kot’ong*) of the rural population. Above all, he bemoaned the deprived diet of the rural population, stating that, “farmers, driven by hunger and the will to live, have managed to barely survive on grass roots and tree barks (*ch’ogŭn mokp’i*), which are hardly edible.” Additionally, he deplored the poor condition of rural housing, which he compared it to “crab shells.” Beyond food and housing, he worried that poverty impeded any cultural and technological progress. “The majority of farmers,” he argued, “have an uncivilized and barbarous lifestyle,” which entrapped them in

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18 In Chŏngsik, “Chosŏn munhwag ū t’ŭksusŏng” [Peculiarity of Korean Culture], *Munjiang* 2 no. 3 (Mar 1940), 149.
an isolated feudal world where superstition substituted machinery, science, and civilization.\textsuperscript{19} To In all this backwardness in the countryside was not an isolated problem of one sector or region in the Korean peninsula. Rather, he saw it as a national problem that affected the whole nation, as he declared in 1940, “Those who can save the countryside can save Korea. In addition, only by saving the countryside, [we] can anticipate a happier Korea of tomorrow.”\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, his entire life has been devoted to confronting the rural problem and working toward realizing his dream of a more prosperous and equitable Korea.

Although In shared concerns about the rural problem with his contemporaries, he stood out in terms of his explanation and proposed solutions for overcoming the rural problem. At the center of this distinction was his understanding of the land. In’s intellectual position comes through especially clearly in his harsh criticism of the Malthusian approach adopted by Yi Hun’gu, a PhD holder in agricultural studies from the University of Wisconsin, who saw increase in population and limited land as the determining factors for poverty.\textsuperscript{21} According to In’s critique, Yi, in failing to account for other factors, had stressed population increase as the sole reason of poverty in Korea; in other words, enormous rent increases were due to fierce competition among increasing number of farmers seeking to obtain the right to cultivate limited lands.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} In Chŏngsik, “Nōson seikatsu to meishin” [Rural Life and Superstition], Tōyō no hikari 6 no. 2 (Feb. 1944) and In Chŏngsik, “Nōson no kishin to meishin” [Ghosts and Superstition in the Countryside], Chōsen nōson zakki, 100-109.

\textsuperscript{20} In, “Chosŏn munhwa ŭi t’uksusŏng,” 152.

\textsuperscript{21} For more details of Yi Hun’gu, see Pang Kijung, “Ilche ha Yi Hun’gu ŭi nongŏmmon kwa kyŏngje charip sasang” [Yi Hun’gu’s Thoughts on Agriculture and Independent Economy in the Japanese Colonial Period], Yŏksa munje yŏn’gu 1, Dec. 1996: 113-162.

\textsuperscript{22} In Chŏngsik, Chōsen no nōgyŏ kikŏ bunseki [Analysis of Agricultural Structure of Korea] (Tokyo: Hakuyōsha, 1937), 195-196.
rate and then proposed to curb the birth rate by supplying contraceptive pills. Rather than limiting the examination to natural factors, In called for a more expansive \textit{structural} analysis of social factors, a method he found more scientific and more active in terms of espousing interventionist measures.

In’s stress on structural factors originated from contemporary Marxist intellectual circle’s interpretation of history. Heavily influenced by Marxist analysis, In stressed a structural approach through which he aimed to reveal “historical laws” and employ “realistic methods.” By historical laws he meant Marxist historical materialism in which society progresses universally from one historical stage to the next. Only after determining the current historical stage, he believed that realistic methods for historical change could be achieved. Therefore, he endeavored to determine the current historical phase occupied by Korea as his foremost task in bringing historical change to Korea.

His determination to identify the current historical stage of Korea spoke to the intellectual current at the time, such as the so-called Rŏnō-ha and Kōza-ha debate that was transpiring among other Marxists in East Asian countries. In was deeply involved in the debates mainly through his critique of two Korean Marxists, Pak Munbyŏng and Pak Mun’gyu who interpreted the land survey, completed in 1917, as the foundation for establishing the

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\item In Chŏngsik, “Chosŏn nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’gu (ki i): Chosŏn nongōmnon pip’an Yi Hun’gu ŭi soron ŭl pakham” [A Study on the Rural Economy of Korea (Part 2): Critique of the Theory on Korean Rural Economy, Critique of Yi Hun’gu’s Thoughts], Chungang 4 no. 3 (Mar. 1936), 35-36.
\item In, “Chosŏn nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’gu (ki sam),” 62.
\end{itemize}
modern/capitalist land ownership and the corresponding mode of production in Korea. Against both Pak’s ideas, In supported the concept of so-called semi-feudality (pan-bonggŏn) as the current stage of Korea, a concept widely discussed by other Japanese Marxists. On the one hand, In acknowledged modern changes triggered by the land survey. He agreed that, “modern private ownership had been newly established” as a consequence of the survey which guaranteed “inviolable private ownership and its unlimited protection.” Despite this change in land ownership, he maintained that the feudal mode of production “remained unchanged” (yuji chonsok) or rather, modified into a worse form. He explained, the social relation in the Korean countryside not only preserved the typical feudalist features such as high rent and forced labor but also imposed capitalist pressure on farmers through high loan interests, various taxes, union fees, and chemical fertilizer fees. As a result, he was certain of the “unprecedented deterioration” of material conditions in the countryside. The root of rural poverty, In believed, was the lingering traces of feudal mode of production which was, simply put, anachronistic in the age of capitalist mode of production.

The role of Japanese imperialism, however, played an ambivalent part in In’s historical interpretation of the land survey and the current historical stage of Korea. On the one hand, he

26 See O, “1930-nyŏndaeh sahoejuŭijadul ŭi sahoe sŏnggyŏk nonjaeng,” and Yi Suil, “Ilche ha Pak Mun’gyu ŭi hyŏnsil insik kwa kyŏngje ssanag yŏn’gu.” See also In Chŏngsik, “’T’oji chŏmyu ŭi yŏksasŏng: Pak Mun’gyu ssi e taehan pip’an ŭl churo hayŏ” [Historicity of Land Possession: With a Focus on Critique of Pak Mun’gyu], Chosŏn chungang ilbo Mar. 29 to Apr. 4, 1936 and In Chŏngsik, “<<Nongŏp Chosŏn ŭi kömt’o>> ŭi kömt’o: Pak Munbyŏng ssi e taehan pip’an ŭl churo” [Examination of The Examination of Korean Agriculture: With a Focus on Critique of Pak Munbyŏng], Pip’an 5 no. 9 (Sept. 1937): 63-67.


28 In Chŏngsik, “Nongŏp chabon ŭi chehyŏng kwa Chosŏn t’oji chosa saŏp ŭi ŭiūi” [Various Forms of Agricultural Capital and the Meaning of the Land Survey in Korea], Pip’an 5 no. 4 (Apr. 1937), 66.

29 In, “Nongŏp chabon ŭi chehyŏng kwa Chosŏn t’oji chosa saŏp ŭi ŭiūi,” 65.


31 In, “Chosŏn nongch’ŏn kyŏngje yŏn’gu (ki p’al),” 94.
acknowledged the “revolutionary and dismantling (haech’ejŏk)” effects of Japanese imperialism, which he believed brought some progressive alterations to Korea.\(^{32}\) Emulating a typical colonialist and Marxist view of the non-West as lacking and stagnant,\(^{33}\) In expressed skepticism about the internal capacity of Korea to increase production forces. He lamented, “The dynamic force of historical change did not come from within but from the outside.”\(^{34}\) The external force for change, In viewed, was the Japanese empire. In reaching the monopolistic stage of capitalism, Japanese imperialism, he explained, played a critical role in replacing the natural economy of feudalism in Korea with a capitalist commodity economy through the establishment of private ownership. But he also saw “conservative and regressive (t’oebojŏk)” effects of Japanese imperialism working simultaneously to preserve the old mode of production in Korea for the benefit of the empire.\(^{35}\) “Defined and guided by this special and essential handicap,” he surmised that the land survey could not “ensure a thorough reform to change the agricultural relations into the bourgeois form [from the feudal form].”\(^{36}\) Here, In understood the limits of social change under Japanese rule based on the assumption that the empire had blocked Korea from progressing historically from feudalism to capitalism by preserving a feudalist mode of production in the countryside. Then, the logical solution for In was a double action plan: anti-feudalism and anti-imperialism. In order to eradicate feudalism and poverty in Korea, he believed bourgeois land reform needed to join forces with anti-imperialist struggle to remove the Japanese empire from Korea—although he could not explicitly make such a declaration due to censorship.

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\(^{32}\) In, “Chosŏn nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’gu (ki p’al),” 91.

\(^{33}\) For critique of such a colonialist view of time and history, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference, Dipesh Chakrabarty (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

\(^{34}\) In, “Nongŏp chabon ŭi chehyŏng kwa Chosŏn t’oji chosa saŏp ŭi ŭiŭi,” 68.

\(^{35}\) In, “Chosŏn nongch’on kyŏngje yŏn’gu (ki p’al),” 91.

\(^{36}\) In Chŏngsik, “Nongŏp chabon ŭi chehyŏng kwa Chosŏn t’oji chosa saŏp ŭi ŭiŭi (i)” [Various Forms of Agricultural Capital and the Meaning of the Land Survey in Korea 2], Pip’an 4 no. 8 (Oct. 1936), 65.
When In assessed both the progressive and regressive nature of Japanese imperialism, In was able to maintain his critical stance toward the empire for its negative role in arresting Korea in its backward state. However, when he considered only the progressive power of the empire, his anti-imperial action plan dramatically changed. Around the time of his intellectual conversion in 1938, he began to believe that the war economy driven by the empire could positively contribute to Korea’s historical progression from an underdeveloped feudal agricultural stage to a developed capitalist industrial stage. The next section will examine how In came to accept wartime mobilization and *Naisen ittai* as the only developmental path for Koreans.

**Naisen Ittai for the Happiness of Koreans**

On Dec. 14, 1938 when Korea found itself consumed in the Second Sino-Japanese War, a roundtable was held in Kyŏngsŏng (Seoul) to discuss “the current situation” (*siguk*) and Korea’s role as the homefront (*ch’onghu*). This roundtable was one of countless wartime discussions on how best to position Korea and its population in the empire during the wartime, especially in relation to the wartime ideology of *Naisen ittai* and *Kōminka*. Included among notable participants, such as Yi Kwangsu and Chu Yohan, was In Chŏngsik who was recently released from prison in November of the same year from his second arrest in March. As the first speaker of the roundtable and with his newly minted official title, “(converted) ex-communist party member,” In began to address his lengthy opinion on *Naisen ittai* with the following two basic principles:

I think that, like for all other matter, when we contemplate this issue [*Naesŏn ilch’ē; Naisen ittai* in Japanese], we should take the happiness of Koreans and their prosperity as the starting point (*ipkakchŏm*). Secondly, I believe that consideration of political matter is always restricted by an objective reality; therefore, to grasp reality in a coolheaded manner and acknowledging it as such, and maximizing happiness under this
reality is the right attitude that should be taken by political thinkers (chōngch’i jōk sasangin) at every step.\textsuperscript{37}

This quotation not only captures the essence of In’s thinking but also illustrates important aspects of wartime politics surrounding his position. His utilitarian approach is evinced through consideration of happiness and prosperity of Koreans as the most crucial criteria for action. As he had in stressing the importance of scientific research of the current stage of Korea, he continued to emphasize the necessity to capture what he called an objective reality as a precondition for action to realize Koreans’ happiness. Ahead of these two principles, the issue of national sovereignty became secondary to In because he held the belief that even a colonial form of sovereignty could be of greatest utility to the colonized. And indeed, he substantiated this observation with various indicators of economic growth in the expanding empire. Consequently, he supported wartime mobilization as the only way for Koreans to achieve happiness, that which translated to economic prosperity.

Many works on wartime Korea deal with Naisen ittai and Kōminka as an identity formation of Koreans as imperial subjects,\textsuperscript{38} but In’s discussion of the same ideologies shows that the subject formation was closely tied with economic matter. In his 1939 article on the wartime economy of Korea, In Chōngsik asked provocatively, “is Korea indeed a colony?”\textsuperscript{39} This question sprang from his observation of striking industrial developments in Korea in recent years: industrial production had doubled over 10 years; agricultural production still surpassed industrial production, yet the gap separating the two sectors was decreasing; rural residents were

\textsuperscript{37} “Siguk yuji wŏnt’ak hoeŭi” [Roundtable Discussion of Leaders on the Current Time], Samch’ŏlli 11. no. 1 (Jan. 1939), 40.
\textsuperscript{38} For instance, Mark Caprio, Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).
\textsuperscript{39} In Chōngsik, “Senji taisei-ka no Chōsen keizai (ichi)” [Korean Economy under the Total War System 1], Tōyō no hikari 1 no. 2 (Feb. 1939), 35.
moving to industrial cities that were burgeoning mainly in the northern part of the Korean peninsula; and considerable amount of agricultural products were grown not only for food but also for raw materials for the chemical industry. All the evidence convinced In to confirm that Korea was in “transition (inhaeng)” from a country of agriculture to a country of both agriculture and industry.40

This belief in the progressive transition shifted In’s view of the role of Japanese imperialism in Korea from an obstacle to a facilitator of development. He recounted his earlier view, defined as “Marxist-Leninist” by In himself, which he looked at the Korean problem as a threefold issue of nation, colony, and agriculture. According to this view, the Japanese empire was hindering Korean national economic and historical development because the empire deliberately left Korea as an undeveloped agricultural colony in order to obtain food sources below market price from the colony.41 But by 1938, he eschewed this view for failing to explain the industrialization of colony, which was taking place right before his eyes. He now believed that the Leninist account did not sufficiently factor in any industrial development in the colony. From his calculation, recent developments in Korea were driven by the metropole’s capital investment.42 He admitted that the countryside of Korea was still mired in poverty, not completely free from the fetters of semi-feudalism. However, he was confident about the seeming possibility of Korea’s economic transition, and that capital investment from the metropole would dismantle the semi-feudal landlord system and transform Korea into an industrial country, creating a beneficial cycle between agriculture and industry. His logic was simple and optimistic: The more capital invested, the more industrial development, and this

40 In, “Senji taisei-ka no Chōsen keizai (ichi),” 35.
41 In, “Senji taisei-ka no Chōsen keizai (ichi),” 35.
42 According to a 1934 statistics provided by In, 82 corporations out of 174 in Korea were Japanese companies whose capital investment, 84.37 million yens, quintupled Korean capital investment, 18.30 million yens.
would prompt a greater exodus of the rural population to the industrial sector. This, in turn, would pressure the landlords who relied on cheap surplus population in the countryside to cease exploitation and the feudal landlord system would eventually dissolve. Feudal tenant farmers would be, then, liberated from exorbitant rent and accordingly, their living standards would enhance and so would their cultural level. Relying on this rosy sequence, In was able to state confidently that “Korea was not a colony anymore.” As such, the Japanese empire for In was no longer an imperial exploiter but a capital investor.

This dramatic turn in his view of the Japanese empire occurred in concert with wartime concept of East Asian Cooperative Body (Tonga hyŏptongch’e in Korean; To-a kyŏdotai in Japanese) proposed by fascist intellectuals in Japan as a new form of political, economic community whose principle would be based on coexistence, equality, cooperation, and co-prosperity. In was still critical of imperialism per se, blaming Western imperialism for exploiting colonies and leaving them under developed. But for In, the Japanese empire was not of the same ilk as other forms of exploitative imperialism. Rather, he believed that both Korea and Japan were moving into a new phase of history wherein Korea and Japan could develop together.

To In, Naisen ittai’s promise of the equal treatment of Koreans and Japanese was not a deceitful ideology but key part of a development project that would ensure “the benefit (iik),

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43 In, “Senji taisei-ka no Chŏsen keizai (ichī),” 36.
happiness (haengbok), and welfare (pongni) of Koreans” in the future. Furthermore, he believed this vision was not just a possibility but something that was already being realized in “the current situation” as part of an inevitable (p’iryŏnjŏk) historical process as implied by the title of his article, “On the Inevitability of Naisen ittai.” The role of politics or ideology for In was not to go against “historical trends (yŏksajŏk choryu)” but to accept its inevitability and, furthermore, to abet its acceleration.”

For In, Governor General Minami’s Naisen ittai policy was the appropriate policy that would guarantee the same rights and duties for the Korean population including universal education, suffrage, and conscription. Universal education, for instance, scheduled for completion in 1946, would include two million Korean children as Japanese citizens and he expected them to be as well-trained and educated as any other cultured laborers. What Koreans had to do was, In urged, was “to trust the empire unconditionally and cooperate faithfully with the national policies of the empire,” and believe that Naisen ittai would bring “magnificent benefits, improvement, and prosperity” in various sectors from economy to politics and culture.

What Koreans had to do, according to In, was to attract more capital from the metropole since this capital would be used for the overall development of the Korean peninsula. To this end, he called for a more active, not passive or forced, participation of Koreans for wartime mobilization. In argued, the impetus to realize Naisen ittai should come not solely from the “compulsory (kangjejŏk)” nature of the authorities from above but also from the “voluntary demand (chabaljŏk yomang)” by the Korean population themselves from below. Koreans were

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46 In Chŏngsik, “Naisen ittai no hitsuzensei ni tsuite” [On the Inevitability of Naisen ittai], Tōyō no hikari 1 no. 7 (July 1939), 20.
49 In, “Naisen ittai no hitsuzensei ni tsuite,” 23.
already kōmin (imperial subjects) since colonization in 1910 in the legal sense, he admitted, but he solicited more passion from Korean people toward the empire.  

Interestingly, however, what In envisioned as the future for the Korean population under Naisen ittai was not a complete denial of Korean national character but a kind of multinational and multicultural empire where Koreans preserved their national traits such as language, tradition, and culture. Again, the criterion for In was utilitarian in nature. Insofar Korean national characteristics ensured happiness of Korea, he insisted, they should be preserved and developed as part of the newly forming political community. But on the contrary, if Korean national traits are deemed “barriers to development” or become “handicaps to happiness and prosperity,” he insisted that they be abandoned without delay. For instance, he affirmed the utility of Korean script for its easiness for peasant farmers to learn. Therefore, for In it was simply childish and idealistic to argue for a complete effacement of Korean culture as did Hyǒn Yǒngsŏp who had provocatively called for a complete eradication all “Koreanness” including the language.

Yet In’s focus on naisen ittai was less about identity politics over Korean language and spirit than the economic repositioning of Korea in the greater reaches of the empire. Using its geographical advantage, he expected, Korea could be developed as an industrial base for the empire’s advance into the continent. However, In’s hope for industrialization did not mean that he ignored the role of Korea as the granary of the Japanese empire. Rather, he imagined a
simultaneous development of industry and agriculture, expressed in the contemporary catchphrase, *nonggong pyŏngjin* (the even advance of agriculture and industry). Apart from being an industrial base for the empire, he expected Korea to play a crucial role in solving the wartime food problem as the main provider of rice to the soldiers on the front line as well as the consumers in the metropole.

His expectation of Korea as the main rice provider attests to what the postcolonial theorist Kuan-Hsing Chen calls the sub-imperial desire of the colonized or the former-colonized to make their nation a neocolonial power.\(^{54}\) Jumping on the bandwagon of the expanding Japanese empire, In Chŏngsik aspired to establish the status of Korea as the second most prestigious nation in the empire—next to Japan, but higher than other nations such as Taiwan. In the article entitled “The Food Problem of the Co-Prosperity Sphere and Korean Agriculture,” he claimed superiority of Korea over other regions in the sphere for consistently supplementing the annual shortage of about 12.8 million *sŏk* of rice to metropolitan Japan. In this argument, Korean superiority hinged on In’s geopolitical view of the world and the empire, as well as his racialized interpretation of interdependence among foods, environments, and racial characteristics. Above all, he was heavily inclined to adopt the notion of the East as a discrete geographical entity vis-à-vis the West for its distinctive agricultural features. He characterized the agriculture of the East as small-scale farming, scattered lands, lacking in technology, and heavy dependency on manual labor and irrigation. By contrast, he described the agriculture of the West as large-scale farming, technological progress and mechanization, and reliance on rain without irrigation. These distinctive features led to other biological and cultural distinctions between the East and the West, In argued. For instance, In explained the small stature of the people in the East by pointing

to their vegetarian diet in contrast to the people of the West and their meat-based diet. Yet, he did not generalize the East as a unity without any internal differences, for it was still necessary for In to prove superiority of Korea. Taiwan, Japan’s second largest colony, had indeed contributed to alleviating the rice deficit in metropolitan Japan, but he concluded the amount provided by Taiwan was limited. China was the biggest rice producer in the world, but he also downplayed this expansive region, stating that it lacked any capacity for export, let alone produce enough to feed its own population. South East Asian countries could be a viable option for their optimal condition for rice production, but In also downplayed this region by forewarning that importing rice from these countries would invariably exacerbate wartime transportation challenges. He believed Korea had great advantages in comparison to other regions. Above all, he insisted, Korea had a more “developed” technology to grow rice second to Japan. Additionally, he would go on to claim that geographical proximity benefitted the peninsula. Based on these strengths, In declared, Korea was the key to solving the food problem of the empire. If so, how can Korea deliver its promise as the granary of the empire and produce more rice? This vexing question became a main issue for the wartime intellectual who aspired to transform Korea—an impoverished colony stymied by vestiges of feudalism—into a wealthy modern nation in the expanded empire.

55 In Chŏnsik, “Tŏa kyŏeiken no shokuryō mondai to hantŏ no nŏgyŏ” [Food problems in the East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere and the Agriculture of Korea], Kokumin bungaku (May 1942).
56 In pointed out the inferiority of South East Asian rice cultivation technology as “t’oin nongbŏp” (aboriginal agricultural technology) in other articles. See In Chŏnsik, “Tŏa-ken no nŏgyŏ mondai” [The Agricultural Problem in the East Asian Sphere], Naisen ittai (May 1941).
Restructuring of the Countryside for Productivity and Equality

As many works on World War II demonstrate, the need to increase productivity in agriculture was a shared issue among different countries at war. Likewise, the urgency to enhance productivity in agriculture also drew attention of many social players in the Japanese empire, including In who was determined to produce more rice in the Korean peninsula. In the book, *A Study on the Restructuring of the Countryside of Korea*, he surveyed almost all aspects of agriculture in Korea to comb for any seemingly unproductive elements. Labor productivity, which he believed to have been both lacking and ignored until now, emerged as his central focus.

His attention to labor productivity came from his review of the Plan for the Increase of Rice Production implemented during the 1920s and into the early 1930s. He praised the dramatic increase of rice production driven by the plan’s emphasis on land productivity, what In called the “land productive capacity-centered approach.” To be more specific, by employing the colonialist binary between the unproductive old and the productive new, he pointed out three major components that contributed to enhancing land productivity. First, he noted how the plan had increased the ratio of irrigated rice paddy (*surianjōndap*) to rain-fed rice paddy (*ch’ōnsudap*) by irrigating 18 percent of the total rice paddy of the Korean peninsula. Second, the portion of high-yield seeds, the so-called superior rice seeds (*uryang p’umjong*) imported from Japan, increased up to 60 percent as of 1938, surpassing Korean seeds, which was already imbued with

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59 In’s review of the plan is in *Restructuring*, 86-104.

60 *Restructuring*, 91.
a negative connotation in its name, chaeraejong, meaning indigenous seeds. Finally, In explained how the replacement of home-made fertilizer by chemical fertilizer called kǔmbi (golden manure) or kumae piryo (purchased fertilizer) played a significant role in increasing rice yields.

Despite his unequivocal praise for the increased land productivity facilitated by the plan, In was quick to blame the plan for its oversight on labor productivity. According to his account, the plan adopted a simple strategy to invest cheap surplus labor widely available in the countryside. The negative consequence of labor-intensive agriculture, he observed, was that “labor productivity remained extremely low.” He found the labor productivity of farmers in Korea lower in comparison with their Japanese counterpart. In his calculation, Korean farmers invested approximately 80 percent of the total labor time of Japanese farmers, and also yielded only about 66 percent of rice from comparable size of land. He worried that labor was used in a strikingly “wasteful,” “irrational,” “unorganized,” and “disorderly” manner.

In’s concern about labor productivity echoes the wartime biopolitical turn that had problematized the Korean population as one of overpopulation to underpopulation. As research on wartime Korea has examined, labor shortage was a key issue that occupied almost all social players in Korea. In also worried that the wartime situation challenged the state’s ability to maintain its previous approach to agriculture. Above all, he expressed concern about the limited

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61 Restructuring, 93-95.
62 Restructuring, 96-97.
63 Restructuring, 98.
64 Restructuring, 97-98.
65 Restructuring, 157.
supply of chemical fertilizer due to wartime shortage. But more importantly, he observed growing scarcity of labor. In forebodingly predicted that migration of rural population to the industrial city as well as the war front would continue to decrease labor power in the countryside. As a result, he observed labor costs skyrocketing, and more and more lands being left idle or abandoned. In addition to quantity, the quality of labor also mattered for In. With so many “strong young men who are the most robust and superior in capability” leaving the countryside, In worried about the declining quality of labor.

In’s sense of urgency over the quantitative and qualitative deterioration of labor power led him to insist on shifting the focus from land productivity to labor productivity by reorganizing existing labor power in more a rational, systematic, and thus, productive way. In line with wartime trends in and beyond the Japanese empire, he proposed cooperative labor as a productive means of organizing labor in the countryside. As he admitted, cooperative labor was nothing new in the countryside; in fact, rural Korea had a long tradition of cooperative labor in the form of turae and pum’asi. Many intellectuals in late colonial Korea paid attention to these traditions from different viewpoints—as an essential national culture, as pre/anti-capitalist, non-commodified social relations, or as efficient labor organizations. What In, the staunch modernist, wanted instead was not a simple revival of the past but a creation of a new modern

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67 Restructuring, 102-3. War made it difficult to import raw materials for chemical fertilizers, nitrogen. Even the decreased amount of nitrogen had to be shared with another essential commodity of war, ammunition. For more details on the wartime chemical fertilizer problem, see Yi, Ilche ha chŏnsi nongŏp chŏngch’aek kwa nongch’on kyŏngje.

68 When he wrote his book, the draft system of Korean people into the military was not applied to colonial Korea. But In believed such programs would be “achieved” in the near future as an inevitable trajectory of history for Naisen ittai. Indeed, the universal draft system was pronounced in 1942 and implemented in 1944. Details about the history of conscription in colonial Korea can be found in Chapter 1 of Takashi Fujitani, Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

69 Restructuring, 2.

70 Restructuring, 2. Yi Songsun’s work provides detailed official data about labor shortage during the wartime. See Yi Songsun, Ilche ha chŏnsi nongŏp chŏngch’aek kwa nongch’on kyŏngje.

71 Restructuring, 165-183.

labor form that would “strengthen the productive force of labor and maximize productivity of each laborer.”

The paragon for In was labor organization in the industrial sector. In reference to this model, the labor organization in industry, he confidently asserted that “the division of labor and cooperation under regulation and rational organization” was superior to “isolated and individual labor” in terms of “labor productivity per unit.” For someone like In who believed in the city as the heartbeat of modernity, bringing the industrial system of the city to the countryside was more than just a step toward higher productivity, but a significant leap forward in the historical progress.

Another “modern” reform for cooperative labor was increased participation of women in agricultural production. Not unlike many other wartime countries, social players in Korea were keen on mobilizing female labor to compensate for the decreasing male labor market in agriculture as well as other industrial sectors. Throughout the colonial period, the colonialist discourse described Korean women’s limited labor participation as an essential Korean national character that bespoke an inherent lack of respect for labor, which, in turn, became the root cause for Korean underdevelopment. In a similar vein, In, too, agreed with the notion that female labor was underutilized outside of the home. Citing a survey conducted by the Korean Agricultural Association (Chosŏn nonghoe), he lamented the extent to which female labor was being “wasted” in the household at the expense of time that could have been dedicated to

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73 Restructuring, 184
74 Restructuring, 167.
76 For instance, see “Punyŏ ŭi nomu tongwŏn” [Mobilization of Female Labor], Tonga ilbo June 1, 1940 and “Taehŭng nodong chohap puin nodongja ch’aeyong” [Taehŭng Labor Association Hired Female Laborers], Tonga ilbo July 12, 1940.
agricultural labor. He found the reason for such disparity from social structure. He explained that there had been no need for women to participate in agricultural labor, especially in areas with ample surplus labor such as the southern part of the Korean peninsula. Despite his sincere attempt to account for structural reasons, In still shared the problematic assumption that household labor was either less valuable or unproductive than outside work. Guided by this assumption, he claimed that “labor power of women (punyŏja) should be mobilized in earnest” for agricultural work.

As In had beseeched, cooperative labor was widely practiced during the wartime. As of 1941, about 240 thousand cooperative work units (kongdong chagŏppan) were formed in 80,412 villages, and responsible for 61 percent of rice paddies. To facilitate female participation in agricultural labor, 17,366 childcare centers operated during the busy farming season, taking care of 312,207 children. But In’s visit to a village in Ansŏng, Kyŏnggi Province eroded his confidence in the initiative. He was concerned that the units in the village did not achieve maximum efficiency. For instance, In was dissatisfied with the low quality of childcare facilities in failing to provide collective education and modern clinical and hygienic services. The lack of cooperative kitchen facilities was also a source of disappointment for In. Without a communal kitchen In was concerned that individual farmers would waste the precious work day commuting

77 Restructuring, 157. The Korean Agricultural Association, established in 1926, was the biggest agricultural organization during the colonial period. For details, see Kim Yongdal, Ilche ŭi nongŏp chŏngch ’aek kwa Chosŏn nonghoe [The Agricultural Policy of the Japanese Empire and Korean Agricultural Association] (Seoul: Hyean, 2003).
78 Restructuring, 158.
80 Restructuring, 188.
to and from work site to prepare lunch at home, thereby lowering the overall efficiency.

Additionally, he foresaw how varying qualities of lunch boxes according to individual means could weaken the cooperative spirit among its members.81 He was also worried about the possibility of total efficiency diminishing due to male famers having to keep apace with their slower female counterpart.82 Observing all the inefficiencies, In urged the Korean countryside to strive for maximized efficiency.

In’s discussion of female participation heavily focused on efficiency, but increasing participation of women in agriculture triggered discussions about how to handle the changing gender relations in the countryside. For instance, discussions about women’s clothing is revealing in this regard. During the war the state and other social players recommended wearing mompe, a style of baggy pants for its convenience and efficiency, but with the gender implication of pants closely tied to men, the preferred the sartorial choice for work aroused varied responses among Korean women—from those who feared losing their female gender identity to those who altered it to befit a more feminine style.83 A roundtable discussion held by the Finance Cooperative, in which In participated provides a small window into the tension brewing over increasing female participation in agriculture. At the roundtable, In described a “pleasant and harmonious” scene of “men and women romantically planting rice and weeding together, while taking turns singing.” Responding to In’s description, Ch’ae Mansik, a famous writer, asked in jest, “Are there any inappropriate affairs?” With a tinge of sarcasm In answered, “there is absolutely no such thing.”84 Despite the jocular tone, this brief exchange between Ch’ae and In

81 Restructuring, 187.
82 Restructuring, 186-187.
83 An T’aeyun, “Ilche mal ch’ŏnssi ch’egi yŏsŏng e taehean pokchang t’ongje: momppe kangje wa yŏsŏngsŏng yuji ŭi chŏllyak” [Control of Women’s Dress during the Wartime in the Late Colonial Period: Enforcement of Momppe and Strategies to Maintain Femininity], Sahoe wa yŏksa 74 (2007): 5-33.
84 In Chŏngsik, “Munhwain ŭi nun e pich’ın nongch’on kwa kŭmyung chohap” [The Countryside and Finance
reflected growing concerns about the changing social and moral norms engendered by expanded female roles in agricultural production.

In’s fundamental concern was that cooperative labor and female labor mobilization, as novel and progressive as those solutions may be, were insufficient. Insofar farmers relied on manual labor, these initiatives alone could not manage the persistent issue of absolute labor shortage. Therefore, his “ultimate solution” (chongguk chŏk haegyŏl) to wartime labor shortage was mechanization. He was deeply enchanted by the productivity of machines, reproducing a version of the global fantasy for agricultural mechanization in the 20th century. He provided a case of a village in Okayama Prefecture in which tractors improved labor productivity by threefold. In was optimistic that mechanization would bring even greater levels of productivity to Korea. He calculated that at the current moment, farmers, who made up 70 percent of the total population, fed the entire Korean population, which translated to one farmer feeding approximately 1.3 persons. But if agriculture was mechanized, In was optimistic that one farmer could potentially cultivate about 1,000 acres of land and produce hundreds to thousand times more food, which would be enough to feed 2,000 people.

The appeal of mechanization for In went beyond technology for enhancing productivity. Rather, In also saw mechanization as a social and cultural solution for improving farmers’ cultural level, and in doing so, close the cultural gap between the city and the countryside. For

Association Seen through the Eye of a Cultured Man], *Hantō no hikari* 4 no. 1 (Jan. 1942), 25.

85 *Restructuring*, 194.


87 *Restructuring*, 160

88 *Restructuring*, 159.
this intellectual who equated culture with urban facilities, the current status of culture in Korea was defined by an “unevenness” (p’yŏnjae) of culture between two geographical entities. He claimed that cultural facilities such as newspapers, libraries, universities, and transportation existed only in the city while the countryside “lagged behind cultural trends and remained stagnant in old modes of barbarism and ignorance.” He expected that when farmers begin cultivating with tractors and move water with electric pumps, farmers would start to acquire even the most elementary knowledge about modern technology, and eventually become modernized agricultural producers. He held the belief that dramatic effects of mechanization would not only “overcome power of nature,” but also “liberate farmers from old superstitions, tradition, and stubborn customs.” According to In, this change would eventually lead to “narrowing the cultural gap between the city and the countryside.”

Without straying from his earlier position, In during the war years continued to criticize the landlords and the feudal landlord system as the main obstacle to mechanization becoming a viable solution for increasing productivity and overcoming unevenness. In reviewing the current landlord system, he was able to diagnose the absurdity of the situation; that the majority of tenant farmers had to reckon with extremely high rent, up to 80 percent, which left them well below the poverty line and without any room for economic stability, let alone invest in mechanization. In his view, landlords were the only social group in the countryside who had the means to invest in mechanization, and yet, they remained indifferent to higher productivity for they only cared about extracting the maximum amount of rent from their land irrespective of the total amount of

89 In Chŏngsik, “Chosŏn nongch’on ŭi hyŏnsil kwa munhwa toip ŭi chobŭn mun” [The Reality of Korean Countryside and the Narrow Door for Culture Introduction], Munjang 2 no. 7 (Sept. 1940), 113.
90 In Chŏngsik, “Chosŏn nongch’on ŭi hyŏnsil kwa munhwa toip ŭi chobŭn mun,” 116.
91 Restructuring, 110-132.
agricultural products yielded. In particular, he was hostile to absentee landlords residing in the city, for they represented the worst kind of “nonproductive” and “parasitic” social group consuming luxuries thanks to the output from the countryside while refusing to reinvesting their profit. Therefore, the necessary precondition for mechanization, In insisted, was for the feudal landlord system and its high rent to be reformed so that the living condition of Korean farmers could be stabilized and improved to the point where farmers could comfortably invest in mechanization.

To dismantle feudalism for mechanization, In partly relied on the moral awakening of landlords and their contribution toward changing feudal landlord system through lower rent. He also urged absentee landlords not to stay idle but to go back to the countryside and lead their tenant farmers in production. However, he did not expect such a simple moral advice to solve the problem. Instead, In counted on means more powerful and systemic in the new era. Yet, his answer was not a drastic land reform or anti-imperialist revolution. His answer, instead, was a planned intervention of the state with the cooperation of experts.

**Experts in State-Planned Economy**

In’s wartime solution to the land problem was technical; it was not to redistribute or collectivize land but to lower high rent prices down to a reasonable one (*chŏkchŏng sojangnyo*). But In’s call for a more reasonable rent figure was followed by the question: What would be considered a reasonable rent? For tenants, he stated, lower rent would allow them to better stabilize their

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92 *Restructuring*, 162-163.
93 *Restructuring*, 162. His critique against absentee landlords and *saŭm ot marŭm* as their representative and the mediator of exploitation can be found in other works. For instance, see In, *Chŏsen nŏson zakki*, 173-185.
94 *Restructuring*, 4-5.
living conditions. But if the figure is too low, he worried about the possibility of jeopardizing the
wartime aim to increase food production due to landlords losing the incentive to utilize land for
food production and instead, abandoning their land or repurposing it altogether.\textsuperscript{96} If so, who
should decide on a reasonable figure for rent that would satisfy the dual task of stabilizing
farmers’ living and also maximizing food production?

To answer this challenging question, In turned to the state as the most disinterested,
rational, and efficient social entity. Although this former Marxist intellectual maintained his
critical stance toward capitalism, he pinned all his hopes on a fantasy of the state as the most
efficient social entity capable of overcoming any excesses of liberal capitalism through active
engagement in social relations. His idea was in tune with the zeitgeist, shared by his
contemporaries—ranging from New Deal advocates and Nazi German national socialists, to
Japanese social scientists and Korean Marxist economists alike, figures such as Pak Kŭkch’ae
and Yun Haengjung.\textsuperscript{97} Beyond intellectual circles, the colonial state in the early 1930s already
attempted to intervene in the countryside with a number of social engineering projects, claiming
itself as the benevolent mediator of social antagonism. Through the enactment of Farmland Law
of Korea in 1934, for instance, the state endeavored to limit the power of landlords

\textsuperscript{96} Restructuring, 110-111.
improving the rights of tenant farmers. In 1932, the state launched the Rural Revitalization Movement (Nongch’ong chinhŭng undong) in the name of stabilizing the livelihood of farmers and increasing the number of independent small farm owners (chajangnong ch’angjŏng).

In’s emphasis of the role of the state in rural society was in line with the changing political landscape in the 1930s. He stated, “[M]y position is completely unrelated to the unilateral loss and gain of landlords or tenants. The existing rent should be reconsidered from the perspective of the state (kukkajŏk ipchang). Seen from the position of the state, the paramount concern is to expand agricultural production force as well as stabilize farmers’ living conditions.” His emphasis on the state’s position resulted from his fascistic proclivities and the belief that individual or class interest should not be prioritized over the interest of the state as the aggregate of the entire population. In liberal capitalism, he explained, land utilization was utterly a matter of individual interests and decisions, and individual possession and use of land had been protected as an absolute inviolable right. But under what he called a “totalitarian economy,” he insisted, individual interests should be restrained by “the total benefit of the state (kuk k’a ŭi chŏnch’ejŏk iik).” In’s stance was not to completely abolish individual landownership or their interests altogether, but to guarantee rights insofar it remained subordinate to the “public good” (kongik). According to this framework, the state was neither a passive bystander nor a violent

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100 Restructuring, 111.

101 In Chŏngsik, “Chosŏn nongŏp kwa singnyang kwa kukt’o kyeThoek” [Korean Agriculture, Food, and National Planning], Samch’ŏlli 14, no. 6 (June,1941), 129.

102 In, “Chosŏn nongŏp kwa singnyang kwa kukt’o kyeThoek,” 129.
representative of a single class, in particular, the landlords. Instead, he argued, the state should establish itself as an impartial mediator and a rational accountant, to intervene in social problems and achieve maximum happiness for the whole population. Based on this utilitarian principle tinged with paternalism, In insisted that the state should have the final say on a reasonable rent figure on behalf of the public.

In’s demand for a more expansive role by the state for the sake of public good went beyond microscopic issues, such as tenant rent control, to include macro-level issues like population redistribution and uniform development of industries—another major issue during the war years.103 During his tenure as a member of the Committee for the Problem of National Territory of Korea, he wrote several articles about national territory planning (kukt’o kyehoek). He described the project as a step toward an “organized and comprehensive use and development of all the national territory that is included in the domain of national sovereignty.” “The main aim of the planning initiative,” he continued, “was to use and develop the given national territory more efficiently and in a planned manner with consideration of all aspects of national security, industry, culture, population, and food.”104 According to this proposition, he proposed to develop Korea in the most efficient way by subcategorizing regions according to their agricultural characteristics: the southern rice paddy area should be developed to further support rice production for climate and soil conditions were optimal; the northwestern dry field area should be redeveloped as the foundation for heavy industry because of available natural resources and electricity; lastly, the mid-peninsula region, lying between the rice paddies and the dry fields, should accommodate both agriculture and industry. Through this vision, he dreamt of a uniform

103 For the national planning of land in the late colonial period, see Chŏn Sangsuk, “Chŏnsi Ilbon kukt’o kyehoek kwa taedonga kongyŏnggwŏn kūrigo Chosŏn kukt’o kyehoek”[National Land Planning of Japan, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and Korea], Sahoje iron 51 (May 2017): 281-308.
104 In Chŏngsik, “Chosŏn nongŏp kwa singnyang kwa kukt’o kyehoek,” 128.
development between industry and agriculture followed by an even distribution of population across both sectors and between city and countryside. This plan, In expected, would not only prevent excessive concentration of population to the city, but also ensure appropriate amount of land to the rural population for their livelihood.  

It is almost worth noting that for Korean intellectuals like In, the opportunity to lend their expertise to the state’s social engineering projects allowed them to articulate a new ideal subjectivity for themselves. As experts, they were able to shed their image as impractical savants and rebrand themselves as new intellectuals with skillsets that were not only practical and scientific, but also technological. For instance, he attempted to prove his worth by calculating a reasonable rent that could be used by the state. When he defined the rent as the deduction of stable living expenses and expanded reproduction expenses from the total sum from cultivation, he felt compelled to conduct a detailed research to calculate the accurate rent figure. Yet, he lamented that he could only gather a few detailed surveys on “the content (naeyong) and reality (silt’ae) of the farming economy.” By supplementing his data with another official survey, he managed to calculate the total expenses and concluded 3 wŏn and 94 chŏn as the reasonable rent for one average farming family. Here, what is important for us to

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105 In Chŏngsik, “Chŏsen ni okeru kokudo keikaku to nōgyō keikaku” [National Planning and Agricultural Planning in Korea], Chŏsen sōtokufu chōsa geppō 12 no. 2 (Feb. 1941): 1-16.
106 For the intellectual desire for rebirth in Korea, see Kim Yerim, “1930 nyŏndae huban mollak/chaesaeng ŭi sŏsa wa mūisik yŏn’gu” [Aesthetic Consciousness and Narratives of Fall/Rebirth in the late 1930s] (PhD diss., Yonsei University, 2002). For the emergence of scientists, engineers, and technicians as a new ideal type of intellectuals in colonial Korea, see Ch’a Sûnggi, “Chŏnsi ch’ejegi kisul isŏng pip’an” [The Critique of Technological Reason in the Wartime], Sanghŏ hakhoe 23 (June 2008): 13-46. For Japan, see Aaron S. Moore, Constructing East Asia: Technology, Ideology, and Empire in Japan’s Wartime Era, 1931-1945 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013) and Hiromi Mizuno, Science for the Empire: Scientific Nationalism in Modern Japan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).
107 Restructuring, 112.
109 Restructuring, 151.
keep in mind is less the validity of his calculations than to note his keen desire to partake in the scientific method based on correct data.

His passion for knowledge, matched only by his devotion to the Korean people, compelled In to make frequent visits to the countryside and produce knowledge on the rural population. He despised lackadaisical scholars, for instance, those who only relied on readily available official documents such as the family registry, which he claimed was too far removed from reality of family life.\textsuperscript{110} To overcome this “enormous distance,” he aimed “to move one step closer—into the nooks and crannies of the farming family life—to dissect and analyze it in detail.”\textsuperscript{111} Indeed, In traveled the entire peninsula including his hometown for field research.\textsuperscript{112}

His research was also transnational in scope, for In physically crossed over into Manchuria and Japan for comparisons.\textsuperscript{113} Although he did not physically visit sites of agriculture beyond the empire, places like India, Germany, Britain, and the USA were also of keen interest to In.\textsuperscript{114} He was connected to the global network of knowledge by reading the latest works of contemporary intellectuals such as John Lossing Buck, Pearl Buck, Tachibana Shiraki, and Karl Wittfogel.\textsuperscript{115}

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} In, \textit{Chōsen nōson zakki}, 71.
\item \textsuperscript{111} In, \textit{Chōsen nōson zakki}, 71-72.
\item \textsuperscript{113} In Chōnsik, “PungMan ūi nongch’on” [The Countryside in Northern Manchuria], \textit{Chogwang} 8 no. 7 (July 1942): 40-47 and In Chōnsik, “Naeji nongch’on kihaeng” [Travel to the Countryside in Japan], \textit{Chogwang} 10 no. 2 (Feb. 1944).
\item \textsuperscript{114} In Chōnsik, “Togil ūi sesŭp nongjang” [Inherited Farms in Germany], \textit{Chogwang} 7 no. 9 (Sept. 1941): 146-152, In Chōnsik, MīYŏng singnyang kyŏngje ūi wigi” [Crisis in the Food Economy of the USA and the Great Britain], \textit{Ch’unch’u} 3 no. 2 (Feb. 1942): 37-41, In Chōnsik, “Hakchŏng-ha ū indo” [India under Brutal Rule], \textit{Hantō no hikari} 58 (Sept. 1942).
\item \textsuperscript{115} In Chōnsik, “Taeji e panyŏngdoen TongAsea sahoe” [East Asian Society Reflected in \textit{the Good Earth}], \textit{Munjang} 1 no. 8 (Sept. 1939): 135-143, In Chōnsik, “Asiajŏk chŏngch’esŏng ūi munje: China sahoe e taehan punsŏckhŏk
\end{itemize}
In’s other wartime book, *The Agriculture Zone of Korea* (1940) was the outcome from his quest to detailed a statistical analysis of different areas in the Korean peninsula from the southern rice farms and the northern seashore villages to the slash-and-burn farming in the mountains.\(^\text{116}\) To complement the statistical approach, another book, *A Miscellany of the Countryside of Korea* took a qualitative approach to the countryside of Korea.\(^\text{117}\) In the book, he covered almost all aspects of the countryside of Korea from marriage and family, to food and housing, to education and leisure, all in a more casual—yet still academic—tone.

Despite his veneration for the cool-headed expert, In also conceptualized the new image of the intellectual as an active and passionate figure, someone who could demonstrate love and devotion to his people. He declared, “Genuinely cultured people love culture, love the state, and love others... Sincere love for people as well as advanced knowledge should be part of everyone’s flesh and blood.”\(^\text{118}\) For In, his wartime activities of visiting the countryside and producing knowledge about the Korean population meant demonstrating his love for Koreans as well as his scientific expertise. In doing the tasks, however, he served the colonial state that sought detailed knowledge of the Korean population for wartime mobilization. Indeed, many of his studies were assisted by state apparatuses such as the Bureau of Agriculture and the Finance Cooperative.\(^\text{119}\) Reporting to these bureaus, his energetic research for improvement of Koreans

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\(^{116}\) In Chŏngsik, *Chosŏn no nogyŏ chitai* [The Agriculture Zone of Korea] (Tokyo: Seikatsu, 1940).

\(^{117}\) In Chŏngsik, *Chosŏn nōson zakki*.

\(^{118}\) In, “Chosŏn munhwa ū t’ŭksusŏng,” 150.

\(^{119}\) For instance, In Chŏngsik, “Kaden nogyŏ no ichikenkyū: ichi shidōku no jittai chōsa” [A Study on Slash-and-Burn Farming: Survey of a Guidance Area], *Chōsen sōtokufu chōsa geppō* 11 no. 9 (Sept. 1940): 1-16 was funded by the state. His article, “Nishi-Sen chihō no nōson o iku” was funded by Finance Cooperative and published in the magazine of the institution.
assisted the colonial state to gain knowledge about the current state of the Korean population for efficient mobilization.

Conclusion

Marxist scholars have emphasized that as capitalism expands, so does the irreconcilable chasm between various sectors such as the metropole and colony, city and countryside, and industry and agriculture. Yet, in the first half of the 20th century many capitalists, socialists, and fascists alike shared a similar fantasy for a new social system that would overcome social and economic disparities. Agricultural expert, In Chŏngsik, was one such intellectual who held the promise for a greater equity through further development and state intervention. To In, the call to increase productivity in agriculture was not part of a brutal state mobilization to extract food resources from the colony during wartime but a benevolent project of social engineering designed to resolve vexing social and economic problems plaguing the Korean peninsula with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of Koreans in the empire. Driven by this hope, In dutifully performed his role as an expert, visiting the countryside and conducting scientific research on the population, so that the state could successfully realize the rational planning and social intervention it had ardently promised. But in reality, the war was catastrophic for countless people, especially areas where the Japanese military advanced. And yet, this developmentalist intellectual wholeheartedly advocated wartime state-led agricultural projects and Naisen ittai as

120 For instance, see Neil Smith, Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984) and Harootunian, Overcoming by Modernity.
121 Slavoj Žižek, Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).
the only viable path for development, for he had absolute confidence in his developmentalist vision of historical progress for the happiness of Koreans including the rural population.

Chapter 2 continues to examine wartime food politics concerning the rural population through the analyses of one particular type of agriculture and its corresponding subset of the rural population, that is, slash-and-burn farming and farmers. In turn, In Chŏngsik’s views will be contextualized by analyses of two other Korean writers whose agrarian fiction can be taken as a critique of the model of biopolitical expertise that In represented.
Chapter 2
Rescuing the Poor: Slash-and-burn Farmers on the Korean Homefront

Hwajŏnmin, slash-and-burn farmers, whose livelihood entailed clearing forests in remote valleys and mountains for cultivation, had posed one of the biggest concerns for a wide array of social players in Korea throughout the entire colonial period. Especially, in the wake of the Great Depression and rural unrests that ensued, newspapers, magazines, and government reports delivered various opinions on how to best handle those occupying the lowest rung of the social ladder. The slash-and-burn farmers frequently came to be represented in the public media as the most tragic of them all, “roiling in a bottomless pit” due to famines, natural disasters, high tenant rents, and dysfunctional colonial policy.¹ Yet, the vaguely sympathetic rhetoric was occasionally tinged with negativity, describing them as “the most childish [and] inferior” and never failing to mention their “primitive technique,” referring to hwajŏnmin’s lack of modern fertilizers.² One of the most hostile descriptions of slash-and-burn farmers labeled them as “the cancer (amjong) of the forestry administration” for their arson, deforestation, and violation of private or national land ownership.³ Even worse, from the perspective of certain critics, the farmers were considered as a threat to the security of colonial rule because of their possible connection to Manchurian guerillas,⁴ or, if not, their potential to become radicalized.⁵ Regardless of one’s sympathies or

¹ “Hwajŏnmin ch’ŏuch’aek e taehayŏ” [Regarding Means of Treating Slash-and-burn Farmers], Maeil sinbo Aug. 22, 1931.
² “Hwajŏnmin munje haegyŏl ŭi sŏgwang” [A Hope of Solutions to the Slash-and-burn Farmer Problem], Maeil sinbo July 29, 1932.
³ “PukSŏn kaech’ŏk kyehoek ŭi chinbo” [A Progress in the Northern Korea Development Plan], Maeil sinbo Oct. 31, 1931.
hostilities, the shared perspective on these farmers could be summarized as following: government policy should provide an immediate solution to their plight because they crystalized the problems of the Korean countryside and agriculture—or, more broadly, all of Korea. As such, the farmers emerged as the target population of governmental intervention by a diverse group of social players.

This chapter analyzes three specific texts on slash-and-burn farmers, published in 1940, coincidently, the same year when the colonial state intensified its intervention into the marginalized population for war efforts. As the ideology of total mobilization urged everyone to work for the empire, the state rediscovered the farmers as an untapped resource ready to be transformed into productive industrial laborers or efficient farmers for the war economy. In tandem with its developmentalist approach, the state considered the planned relocation of farmers for wartime development also as an attractive social welfare measure to alleviate the poverty of the farmers by enhancing their living standard and thus pacify social unrest. Claiming itself as the most efficient social engineering entity, the state insisted that their biopolitical intervention would bring higher income and stability to the farmers. With these dual desires to develop the war economy and rescue the forgotten, the state sought out slash-and-burn farmers hiding in remote valleys and mountains.

Against this historical background, this chapter examines representation of these marginalized framers by three Korean writers. Resembling the purported goals of the biopolitical state, their texts shared the elitist desire to reach out to the subaltern and ultimately reform them.

5 “Yŏnghŭng chŏksaek hwajŏn sagŏn sibi-myŏng ŭl songguk” [12 People Involved in Yŏnghŭng Red Slash-and-burn Farmer Incident Sent to the Prosecutor’s Office], Tonga ilbo Feb. 21, 1938.
Yet, the three intellectuals diverged in their methods, revealing three competing representations of the rural population: first, a statistical, structural, developmentalist approach of a social scientific expert (In Chŏngsik); second, a romantic, nostalgic, anti-developmentalist approach of a modernist literary figure (Yi Pungmyŏng); and third, a recognition of the impossibility of representation by a critical literary intellectual (Kim Saryang). Moreover, the three intellectuals also differed in their positions toward the state: While In endorsed the state as the most rational social entity for development and welfare, Kim’s was adamantly critical of the growing resemblance between the state and the social elite; whereas for Yi, the state was simply absent. Careful readings of the triangular relationship between the colonial state, social elites, and marginalized populations, alongside themes of metropole/colony, city/countryside, and gender, will reveal how this specific group of the rural population and their agricultural production emerged as a significant area of wartime food politics which went beyond the material issue of agricultural productivity.

The Slash-and-burn Farmer Problem and Government Solutions

Before delving into the three texts, there is a need to explain the political, economic, and social context surrounding the farmers during the colonial period. Due to their nomadic existence, it has always been difficult to ascertain an exact figure for this population. As such, statistics on the farmers were also inconsistent. The officials began collecting the number of slash-and-burn

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6 In Chŏngsik, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū: ichi shidōku no jittai chōsa” [A Study on Slash-and-Burn Farming: Survey of a Guidance Area], Chōsen sōtokufu chōsa geppō 11 no. 9 (Sept. 1940): 1-16.
7 Yi Pungmyŏng, “Hwajŏnmin” [Slash-and-burn Farmer], Maeil sinbo Jan. 31 to Feb. 23, 1940.
8 Kim Saryang, “Kusa Fukashi” [Deep in the Bush], Bungeo shuto (July 1940).
farmers and fields in 1924 only after the completion of the national forest survey. Despite fluctuations during the colonial period, the total number of slash-and-burn farmers was believed to be more than one million. As of 1924, the survey counted 1.16 million slash-and-burn farmers, which accounted for about 6 percent of the total population at 18.07 million in the same year. The majority of their habitat was located in two northern provinces of the Korean peninsula, Pyǒngan and Hamgyǒng Province, as well as parts of the Kangwǒn Province in the eastern region of the mid-peninsula. The area in which slash-and-burn farmers worked steadily rose from 160,524 ha in 1924 to 442,045 in 1938. The portion of slash-and-burn farm fields vis-à-vis the total farming lands also increased from 3.32 percent to 8.92 percent. These significant numbers could not be ignored by any modern state including the GGK.

Accounting for their growing number, scholars have correctly pointed out the violent character of GGK policy’s lawful prohibition and surveillance of slash-and-burn farmers. As the colonial state aimed to conserve forests and extract resources more efficiently, the state could not overlook the slash-and-burn farmers who burned trees in order to open up field space. Forest Management Stations (Yǒngnimch’ang) were established already in the early stage of colonial rule in 1907 and continued to manage forest resources by prohibiting illegal use even after the

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9 Kang Man’gil, Ilche sidae pinmin saenghwalssa yǒn ‘gu [A Study on the Living of the Poor in the Colonial Period] (Seoul: Ch’angiak kwa pip’yǒngsa, 1987), 119.
10 Kang, Ilche sidae pinmin saenghwalssa yǒn ‘gu, 130.
11 Kang, Ilche sidae pinmin saenghwalssa yǒn ‘gu, 121. The annual statistics of the GGK (Chōsen sōtokufu tōkei nenpō) categorized slash-and-burn farmers into two groups, those who relied their livelihood only on slash-and-burn farming and those who also cultivated flat-land fields. Because the state did not include the latter in statistics from 1932, it is difficult to get a consistent trajectory about the total number of the slash-and-burn farmers. The households of the first group, called pure slash-and-burn farmers, had steadily increased from 34 thousand in 1926 to 82 thousand in 1932, and then began to decrease to 57 thousand until 1942. Data are cited from Song Kyujin et al. eds., Tonggye ro pon Han’guk kŭnhyŏndaesa [Modern and Contemporary Korean History Seen through Statistics] (Seoul: Ayŏn ch’ulp’anbu, 2004), 133-134.
12 Song, Tonggye ro pon Han’guk kŭnhyŏndaesa, 128-129. The official unit for measurement was chǒngbo. 1 chǒngbo is about 1 ha. From now, chǒngbo is replaced by ha. From 1938, the size and portion had been slightly decreased into 374,247 ha and 7.72 percent.
office was reshuffled into the Office of Forestry Management (Yŏngnim'sŏ) in 1926. From the mid-1920s, one officer per county was dispatched with policing power to crack down on illegal activities in forests. Apart from augmenting its policing power, the state gradually transferred the ownership of national forests to individuals who were willing to invest their own capital toward reforestation. Private forests accounted for 80 percent of 8.2 million trees planted between 1910 and 1942. One economist praised the outcome as “an unprecedented success in the history of the world,” believing privatization and state subsidy as the main forces behind modernization of Korean forests, transforming the devastated forests into well-managed resources. Other scholars have rejected this view, claiming that such an assessment is informed by a modernization theory and grounded in the contentious idea of tragedy of the commons. Regardless of different evaluations, it is clear that from the perspective of the state and individual landowners the farmers had to be removed from forests, be it national or private.

Indeed, colonial policy uprooted slash-and-burn farmers from forests, which invariably deteriorated their living conditions, but it is equally important to note that the colonial state continued to make efforts to resettle the farmers. The state opted for relocation, believing it to be a more progressive solution than mere prohibition. For instance, the Plan for Cleaning-Up Slash-and-Burn Farming Fields (Hwajōn chŏngni saŏp) began in 1916 with the aim to resettle slash-

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15 Ch’oe, Ilche ha Chosŏn imya chosa saŏp kwa sallim chŏngch’aek, 91-109.
16 Yi Uyŏn, “Singminjigi imŏp ŭi kündae:wa: ch’wich’ae imŏp esŏ yuksŏng imŏp ŭro” [Modernization of Forestry in the Colonial Period: From Forestry of Collecting to Forestry of Nurturing], Kyŏngje sahak 38 (2005), 152. The portion of private forests had steadily increased from 47.61 percent of the total forests in Korea in 1910 into 67.26 in 1942. Data is from Song, T’onggye ro pon Han’guk kŭnhyŏndaesa, 145-146.
18 For instance, see Ch’oe, Ilche ha Chosŏn imya chosa saŏp kwa sallim chŏngch’aek.
and-burn farmers from national forests to other locations. In order to concretize the relocation scheme, the GGK conducted surveys and supported research into this matter. For instance, Odauchi Michitoshi’s survey on slash-and-burn farmers in 1924 analyzed the reasons for government relocation plan’s failure. Categorizing slash-and-burn farmers into two groups as nomadic and sedentary, Odauchi argued that the sedentary group, who lived in national forests over generations, feared relocation because of their attachment to their place of origin. By contrast, he insisted, the nomadic group preferred living a more fluid life moving from one place to another. Based on this distinction, Odauchi suggested alternate approaches to these two groups. Particularly, he called for a subtler consideration in relocating the sedentary group. Instead of repopulating them to a totally unfamiliar area, he advised the government to relocate them to places near where they had been living.

Despite continuous attention dedicated to slash-and-burn farmers, the relocation plans of the 1910s and 1920s failed to realize their aims. Above all, the number of slash-and-burn farmers did not decrease in the 1920s. The failure of colonial policy on slash-and-burn farmers became clearly evident in the notorious Kapsan Incident of 1929 when one of the staffs of the Office of Forestry Management burned down 63 houses of slash-and-burn farmers who resisted relocation. The incident invited harsh criticism from Koreans who urged the GGK to rein in its

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19 For the details about the plan, see Ch’oe Pyŏng’t’aek, “Chosŏn ch’ongdokpu ŭi hwajŏn chŏngni saŏp” [The Plan for Cleaning-Up Slash-and-burn Farming Fields], Han’gu munhwaw 58 (June 2012): 139-177.
20 Chŏsen Sŏtoku, Chŏsen buraku chŏsa hŏkoku.
21 Chŏsen Sŏtoku, Chŏsen buraku chŏsa hŏkoku, 33. Apart from Odauchi’s report, the state supported another research team in 1928, led by Keijō Imperial University professor Hashimoto Šukezaemon. Ch’oe, Ilche ha Chosŏn imya chosa saŏp kwa sallim chŏngch’aek, 161-164.
22 “Kapsan hwajŏn sagŏn e taehaya” [On the Kapsan Slash-and-burn Farming Incident], Maeil sinbo July 19, 1929. For more about the incident, see Ch’oe, “Chosŏn ch’ongdokpu ŭi hwajŏn chŏngni saŏp,” 164-167.
violent relocation plan and implement more active and inclusive policies that would ensure a “stable livelihood” by providing substitute land for living and alternative jobs.\(^23\)

The momentum for more active and inclusive solutions sprang from the wartime development and industrialization boom in the northern part of the Korean peninsula in the 1930s. As the Japanese empire expanded into Manchuria, China, and South East Asia in the 1930s and 1940s, the northern part of the Korean peninsula had become an important base for holding military supplies due to its strategic location and for its rich resources, including wood, water, and minerals. The Northern Korea Development Plan (*PukSŏn kaebal kyehoek*) began in 1932 as a 15 year plan with aims to access the abundant resources in the area through constructions of forest railways and lumber processing factories.\(^24\) In addition to developing remote areas, this plan sought to stabilize the livelihood of the farmers by transforming the nomads into permanent landowners through long-term leases and ownership.\(^25\) Under the guise of assistance, *guidance* officers were dispatched to farming sites. In the ratio of one personnel to 700 households, the officers, as appendages of the biopolitical regime, were expected to *guide* the farmers to obey rules, organize associations, and boost their morale for self-improvement.\(^26\)

While slash-and-burn farmers were seen as a vexing impediment to forest development, at the same time, the state and other social players also viewed them as people who could potentially develop remote and undeveloped areas, or in the words of one newspaper article,

\(^{23}\) For instance, see “Hwajŏnmin kuje munje” [The Problem of Rescuing Slash-and-burn Farmers], *Maeil sinbo* Oct. 7, 1927.

\(^{24}\) See Chŏsen sŏtokufu, *HakuSen kaitaku jigyŏ keikakusho: shinrin seki kakei no bun* [The Business Plan to Develop Northern Korea: Forest-Related Matter] (Keijō: Chŏsen sŏtokufu, 1932), i. For more detailed information about the plan, see Ch’oe, “Chosŏn ch’ŏngdokpu ŭi hwajŏn chŏngni saŏp.”


\(^{26}\) Ch’oe, “Chosŏn ch’ŏngdokpu ŭi hwajŏn chŏngni saŏp,” 169-173.
“pioneers of northern Korea.” Published in the official magazine of the Industrial Bank of Korea, a 1941 research on the Korean labor power estimated 1.7 million people in the countryside as potential laborers who could be relocated into other sectors. Among the 1.7 million were 100,000 slash-and-burn farmers. This number accounted for almost half of the total adult work force in slash-and-burn farming, which totaled 215,503.

Apart from the statistical figure, governmental interventionists also paid attention to the purported unproductivity of slash-and-burn farming as a condition that could be improved upon. Because slash-and-burn farmers tended to work without chemical fertilizers, their form of agriculture was frequently branded as “plunder farming” (yakt’al nongŏp), “immature” (yuch ’i), “inferior” (chŏyŏl), “violent” (nanp ’ok), and “unplanned” (kyehoek i mumo). But for many wartime social players including the state, their allegedly primitive farming technology, ironically, also meant potential for expansion at a time when the productivity level of mature land in the flatland was thought to have already plateaued with advanced technology. If modern farming technology was adopted, an editorial expected, land used for slash-and-burn farming could contribute to wartime food production as well as ensure a stable livelihood.

Accordingly, the state viewed the agricultural skill of slash-and-burn farmers as an asset for food production. As rice production dropped due to shortages in chemical fertilizer and

28 Masahisa Hiroshi [正久宏至], “Chŏsen ni okeru rŏdŏryoku no ryŏteki kŏsatsu” [Quantitative Analysis of Labor Force in Korea], Shokugin chōsa geppō 32 (Jan. 1941), 53. This number accounts for about 23 percent of 7.3 million people working in agriculture. I have come to know Masahisa’s article from Yi Songsun’s Ilche ha chŏnsi nongŏp chŏngch’ aek kwa nongch’on kyŏngje, 213.
29 Masahisa, “Chŏsen ni okeru rŏdŏryoku no ryŏteki kŏsatsu,” 50.
30 “Hwajŏnmin munje haegyŏl ŭl sŏgwang.”
31 For instance, “PukSŏn kaech’ŏk kyehoek ŭi chinch’ŏk” [A Progress in the Northern Korea Development Plan], Maeil sinbo Mar 29, 1934.
32 “PukSŏn kaech’ŏk kyehoek ŭi chinch’ŏk.”
irrigation during the wartime, the colonial state turned its attention to formerly ignored miscellaneous grains whose production was relatively stagnant partly due to lower market value.\(^{33}\) Refocusing their value in terms of nutrition and productivity, the state implemented the Plan to Increase Dry-Field Production in 1941.\(^{34}\) State-sponsored agricultural scientists researched the existing farming technology in the area and praised the farmers as specialists in miscellaneous grains, and for being fearless in their ability to cultivate new lands in the harsh terrains of northern Korea.\(^{35}\) Especially, a local branch of the Office of Agricultural Sciences, established in 1930 in Poch’onbo in Kapsan, played an important role in researching the crops of slash-and-burn farmers.\(^{36}\) In sum, all these factors overdetermined the slash-and-burn farmers as a target population for improvement and development in 1940, the very year when three intellectuals published their respective works on this same group.

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34 For the details about the plan, see Yi Songsun, Ilche ha chŏnsi nongŏp chŏngch’aek kwa nongch’on kyŏngje.
35 See “Hwajŏn chŏngni kongjak chungyosŏng” [The Importance of the Scheme for Cleaning-Up Slash-and-burn Farming Fields], Maeil sinbo Apr. 21, 1935.
36 “Ch’ŏnhye pogo mujinjang kosan chidae ŭi sanmul” [Unlimited Natural Bounty, Produces of High Mountain Areas], Tonga ilbo Aug. 21, 1937.
trends,”37 he defined the current status of slash-and-burn farmers as a “crisis.” He stated, “slash-and-burn farmers are now in a state of general crisis. Even their income from supplementary work and other wages cannot save them from this crisis. … Above all, they are forced into a corner to the extent that they barely manage to survive by eating grassroots and tree barks throughout the year. There is no need to use statistics for this. They are basically starving.”38 Despite his insistence that statistics were not necessary, he was willing to provide a series of figures to explain the predicament. Indeed, he boasted of his expertise to translate their crisis into numerical form.

In’s ability to interpret structural relations behind numbers served as yet another qualification solidifying his status as an expert. As a former Marxist who put emphasis on social structures, In eschewed any explicitly colonialist cultural accounts of Koreans and the subpopulation to explain their poverty. Instead of blaming Korean backwardness, slash-and-burn farmers’ laziness, or their indifference to advanced technology, he saw poverty as a result of social and natural relations. First, he saw natural relations as the determining factor for low land productivity. “There is no need to say that productivity (seisansei) of slash-and-burn fields was extremely low,” he pointed out with numbers comparing productive output between slash-and-burn farming fields and other permanent lands.39 Additionally, he pointed out the extremely short growing season, which lasted for only 5 months from early May until late September, as another natural factor that had prevented double-cropping and, of course, rice production—the most profitable cash crop. As a result, he was certain that it was simply such natural factors that

37 In Chŏngsik, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū: ichi shidōku no jittai chōsa” [A Study on Slash-and-Burn Farming: Survey of a Guidance Area], Chōsen sōtokufu chōsa geppō 11 no. 9 (Sept. 1940), 1.
38 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 9.
39 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 3.
kept slash-and-burn famers from producing more than “the minimum … primitive living materials.”

Here, In defined the slash-and-burn farmers’ primitive methods as a result of natural conditions, which led him to echo the common contemporary rhetoric describing the farmers as self-sufficient recluse, isolated from society. However, informed by his early Marxist training, he emphasized social relations as the core of his analysis. First, the state figures as the foremost crucial social entity in his framework. He explained that when the Office of Forestry Management began managing state-owned properties, the state had been strictly prohibiting farmers from tilling new land. This “external restraint,” he continued, had decreased the size of slash-and-burn farming fields. Additionally, he underscored the heavy burden of taxes on the farmers. As a second source of external social constraint, In discussed the effects of the commodity economy. He observed, “Even deep in their mountains, the law of commodity economy has been significantly embedded to the degree that cash money for income and expenditure has come to substitute the existing natural economy based on real goods (genbutsu). Their farming technology remains bound to an extremely primitive stage. Yet, at the same time, it is also clear that they live in the monopolistic stage of modern commodity economy.”

Similar to his conceptualization of semi-feudalism in the countryside of Korea as the combination of feudal mode of production and capitalist market economy, he stressed the anachronism between the primitive stage and the monopolistic stage in the mountain areas. Yet, In interpreted the mode of production of slash-and-burn famers that which he defined as being

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40 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 3.
42 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 15.
43 See Chapter 1.
primitive was even more retrograde than feudalism according to his framework of linear historical development. “The contradiction of their [slash-and-burn farmers] living,” he asserted, was that they had to pay taxes and buy commodities with cash, while their low output prevented the farmers from earning enough money to fully partake in the open market.

He proved this conclusion through quantified analysis of the cash flow of three specific slash-and-burn farmers. Not surprisingly, In observed a deficit in the accounts of all three households. This imbalance in cash flow increased the debt of slash-and-burn farmers, which invariably worsened their living conditions. According to his more comprehensive survey on the average income of Musan County, almost two thirds of households in Musan, 205 out of 299, were in debt. Even worse was debt from usury whose abusive interest rate hovered around 25 to 26 percent. The very nature of debt was also problematic in In’s view. He lamented the unproductive nature of debt, stating that there lacked so-called “progressive” or “productive” potential for debt to expand reproduction, such as opening new agriculture businesses or improving farming technology, when the biggest reason for debt was to buy food for subsistence.

In Chapter 1, In Chǒngsik outlined his confidence in the bright future of Korean farmers through state-led economic development. He projected a similar optimism to the future of this specific type of farmers, too. In his calculation, the livelihood of slash-and-burn farmers deteriorated due to two external social relations, the state and the market economy, yet

44 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 15.
45 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 15.
46 He compared usury debts with debts from Finance Unions that In claimed to be less severe. Finance Unions, becoming later Agricultural Cooperative in South Korea, played a crucial role in managing farmers under the rule of finance capital through its tasks such as providing loans and distributing seeds and fertilizers. See Yi Kyŏngnan, Ilche ha kûmyung chohap yŏn’gu [A Study on Finance Unions under Japanese Rule] (Seoul: Hyean, 2002).
47 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 16.
simultaneously, In also believed in these two social relations to function as dynamic forces to improve their productivity and quality of life. Especially, he expected state-led economic development to make the most impact on northern colonial Korea. In the final page of his report, In asked, “Where shall these slash-and-burn farmers to go, these people who are being bound by the aforementioned handicaps of natural and social relations?” In proposed two potential answers in the form of a rhetorical question: “First, will they move in a planned manner to new farming areas as advised by the Plan of Pioneering Northern Korea? If not, will they descend the mountains in a dispersed and isolated way, and then, to move to Kando in Manchuria or find a piece of land to settle in the peninsula?” In did not bother answering these questions because the answer was all too clear: a planned move.

Through this report, In believed that he could rescue the rural population. However, his approach revealed a profound gap between him and the farmers. In his book, *Rule of Experts*, Timothy Mitchell criticizes how modern power divides the world into a series of binary between experts and non-experts. In these pairs, Mitchell argues, the former positions themselves as the sole agent of development thanks to their ability to claim the universal logic for a bright future. On the contrary, the latter remain as passive objects awaiting the authoritative accounts of experts on their own future. Similarly, in In’s survey slash-and-burn farmers existed only as abstract numbers, faceless and voiceless, in In’s grand vision for a rosy social transformation led by the state.

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48 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 16.
49 In, “Kaden nōgyō no ichikenkyū,” 16.
Sympathy for the “Primitive”: Yi Pungmyǒng’s Nostalgic Representation

In this regard, Yi Pungmyǒng’s short story, *Hwajōnmin*, provides a different perspective on the relocation of slash-and-burn farmers to the city. Rather than a deliverance from poverty, the whole ordeal is presented as a painful detachment from their valleys and alienation that ensues through commodification of labor. In contrast to In’s report, which lacked voices of farmers, Yi’s story was told from the perspective of the slash-and-burn farmers about their life and feeling—albeit in a fictional form. In doing so, Yi provided a more sentimental view of the farmers. Nonetheless, Yi’s anti-developmentalist critique relied on his nostalgic and exotic approach to slash-and-burn farmers—another way of alienating the farmers as ahistorical and without agency, that is to say, the others.

*Hwajōnmin*, a short story serialized in *Maeil sinbo* from January 31 to February 23 in 1940, is one of the efforts of Yi Pungmyǒng (1910–?) to represent marginalized social groups in Korea. Based on his experience working for a nitrogen fertilizer factory in Hŭngnam for three years from 1927, Yi wrote several short stories about factory workers in the early and mid-1930s.51 In these stories, as a member of the KAPF, a Marxist literature group, Yi meticulously detailed the working class with a focus on the poor working conditions of the factories under capitalist oppression.52 In the late 1930s, his interest in heavy industry workers had expanded to include other deprived social groups such as the urban poor, day laborers, and slash-and-burn farmers. In 1937, when Yi began working for a hydroelectric power plant in Changjin, Southern Hamgyǒng Province, he made contact with slash-and-burn farmers and shortly after, he began to

51 For instance, *Chilsso piryo kongjang* [Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory, 1932], *Ammonia t’angk ĭŭ* [Ammonia Tank, 1932], *Ch’ulgún chŏngji* [Stop Work, 1932], *Ojŏn 3si* [3 AM, 1935], and *Minbo ĭŭ saenghwalp yo* [Minbo’s Timetable, 1935] describe factory workers.
take an interest in their plight. Alongside other works such as *Chilssŏngam* (The Big Dipper Rock, 1938) and *Pingwŏn* (*Ice Field*, 1942), *Hwajŏnmin* was one of many works centered on farmers during his time as a worker in the hydroelectric plant.53

Like In’s usage of the word “crisis” to describe the current status of slash-and-burn farmers, Yi’s story adopts a similar but more dramatic vocabulary, such as “tragedy (*pigūk)*,” “suffering (*kot’ong)*,” and “wretched (*ch’ŏch’am)*,” to describe his slash-and-burn characters. Yet, the contents behind the similar terms are actually the opposite, in particular, in their interpretation of slash-and-burn farmers’ future and the role of the state. First, contrary to In’s optimism, Yi’s story casts doubts on the future of the farmers by emphasizing the destruction of a peaceful, self-sufficient mountain life of his protagonists and their struggle for survival in the city. Second, the state is missing in Yi’s story. Instead, the power of nature, more specifically the flood plays the decisive role in demolishing the world of slash-and-burn farmers. The effect of an absent state is enormous. As one scholar of Yi’s work has correctly pointed out, the major antagonisms of Yi’s stories changed over time from workers’ fight against capital in his earlier factory stories to battles against nature.54 Indeed, Yi allocates long pages to describing the main character’s failure to overcome a historical flood followed by his detachment from his home and the commodification of his labor in the city. In his description of the process, Yi represents the farmers as isolated primitives, whose slow extinction was caused by natural disasters. Such a rendering of the vanishing slash-and-burn way of life betrays Yi’s sympathy, but at the same time, it depicts the farmers as an Other, a kind of living fossil in the present.

53 For more information of his bio and works, see Kim Chonguk, “Noguch’i k’onch’erūn kwa ŭi kwan’gye rŭl t’onghæe pon Yi Pungmyŏng ŭi sosŏl segye” [Yi Pungmyŏng’s World of Novels Seen through the Relationship with Noguchi Konzern], *Kugŏ kungmunhak* 155 (Aug. 2010): 275-301.
54 Kim, “Noguch’i k’onch’erūn kwa ŭi kwan’gye rŭl t’onghæe pon Yi Pungmyŏng ŭi sosŏl segye,” 299.
Yi’s nostalgic approach to the farmers as civilization’s primitive Other went in tandem with Yi’s binary representation of the city and the countryside as chaotic vs. peaceful—a common modernist interpretation of seeing the two spaces as existentially separated and antithetical. As researchers of this story have already pointed out, the story is filled with Yi’s dichotomy between the rural life of peaceful, timeless, and pure mountains and the urban life in the hectic, fast-changing, and corrupt city. In contrast to In Chŏnsik’s dry description of Musan County as being “located amidst the large swath of thick forests passing through the series of plateaus of Mt. Paektu,” Yi’s story begins with a colorful description of a timeless, peaceful, harmonious, yet vital and energetic mountain landscape. Yi depicts one summer morning in Ùnsin’gol, a place symbolically called the “Hidden Valley” as “colorful, ever-changing, and beautiful, like a mysterious scene before a living painting.” Yi describes the valley as full of pleasant sounds: “In the refreshing morning, without a particle of dust, there are no unnatural noises heard in the city; like a folk song there is nothing but ‘chorus of happiness’ in subtle melody, adoring the magnificent and sublime nature.” By contrasting the valley to the city, Yi reaches a conclusion about the natural landscape: “The landscape of a deep mountain valley is peaceful and without conflict. The more we see of the crowded natural landscape in the

55 For this binary interpretation in Japan and Korea, see Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity* and Poole, *When the Future Disappears.*
56 For instance, see Ch’aee Hosŏk, “1930 nyŏndae huban’gi Yi Pungmyŏng sosŏl yŏn’gu: Tapssari wa Hwajŏnmin ūl chungsimŭro” [A Study on Yi Pungmyŏng’s Literature in the Late 1930s: With a Focus on Tapssari and Hwajŏnmin], *Han’gu hakpo* 17 no.4 (1991): 186-204 and Kim, “Noguch’i k’onch’erŭn kwa ŭi kwan’gye rŭl t’ŏnghae pon Yi Pungmyŏng ŭi sosŏl segye.’
57 In, “Kaden nōgyŏ no ichikenkyū,” 1.
58 Yi Pungmyŏng, “Hwajŏnmin” [Slash-and-burn Farmer], *Maeil sinbo* Jan. 31, 1940. From here, I use the serial number of this story as the citation page number.
panorama, it seems to reawaken intense vigor for life. There is not a single artificial nor pitiful face in Ûnsin’gol; there is a primitive calm to the air, reminiscent of the bygone days.”

Yi portrays his characters in Hwajônmin as an integral part of this landscape. “A small number of honest individuals keep on living as their ancestors did, without any evolution, without any knowledge of either the beginning nor the end of [the valley], but with the belief that Ûnsin’gol is the whole world, oblivious to any conflict.” The male protagonist, Yudol, is an exemplar of such carefree life in this ahistorical landscape. Above all, the protagonist is rendered undifferentiated from nature as Yudol’s body is told to resemble nature, i.e., “tanned smooth and glossy skin like that of a chestnut” and “well-developed muscles in chest, arms, and legs like lumps.” Yi depicts not only Yudol’s body but also his daily life as natural, simple, and self-sufficient. Yudol’s simple, nature-loving life is also reflected in his beliefs in Ch’ilssông Taegam (The Big Dipper), which was believed to bring wealth and offspring to him, and in the tiger as “the owner of the mountain and a reincarnation of the mountain spirit.” All these connections to nature does not harbour any negative connotations such as backwardness and low productivity like in In’s report. Rather, Yi represents the slash-burn-farmer’s life as a desirable life attuned to nature.

While Yi describes the life of slash-and-burn farmers as primitive, timeless, self-sufficient, and isolated from the outside world, it is important to note that Yi includes many scenes in a contradicting way to reveal how their life was already integrated into the market economy much like In Chôngsik’s report. For instance, Yi presents cutting trees as one of the

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60 Yi, “Hwajônmin,” 1.
most important sources of supplementary income for Yudol. In the story, wood merchants make a business out of dealing timber illegally procured by slash-and-burn farmers, while the farmers sometimes borrow money from the merchants when they are in need of extra cash. Felling trees for money implies that the wooded forests in the story are by no means pure and devoid of human touch—despite Yi’s repeated descriptions of the forests as an immaculate place filled with thick layers of leaves and wild animals. In one telling scene, Yudol calculates the amount of trees he must chop down in order to meet the demand for the construction of railroads. Perched on a rock, Yudol asks himself, “If one railroad tie is three yang, how many in 22 ties? Thirty yang for ten ties and one more thirty yang for another ten. In total, sixty yang for twenty ties.”

Here, the value of trees is calculated in the monetary form. Not only trees but also lands deep in the mountain valleys are presented as commodities, or in other words, as property. With money he would receive in exchange for the timber, Yudol intends to buy a new field from another slash-and-burn farmer.

Yi develops the narrative around how Yudol’s self-sufficient world is undercut by external threats in the form of a commodity fetish. The scene of Yudol’s participation in the ssirûm, a traditional wrestling competition occupies a central place in the first half of the story. Yi spends many pages describing this competition as a spectacle replete with a crowd of onlookers and sellers of various commodities, such as taffy (yǒt), sweet potatoes, and even ice cream. Yi also describes the soundscape of the scene such as the loud clanking sounds made by the special scissors of the taffy seller. Yi describes Yudol’s captivation by the spectacle, but Yi simultaneously stresses Yudol’s mental strength to resist the attraction.

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64 Yi, “Hwajŏnmin,” 12.
66 In the 1930s, this traditional recreation revived as a popular mass recreation.
In emphasizing Yudol’s ability to protect himself from being seduced by commodities, Yi reproduced a gender-biased interpretation of the relationship between consumption and gender which was pervasive not only in Korea but also in the globe in the mid-20th century. In contrast to his positive depiction of the male protagonist who steadfastly resists the lure of commodities and the market economy, Yi conveys a view of women that emphasizes their purported predilection for consumption and their sexual prowess. Yi provides the most symbolic moment in which a pretty prostitute offers a soda—uncommon in Korea at the time—to Yudol during an intermission in the semi-final game. Disagreeing with the taste of strong chemicals and fizzy sensation on his tongue, only after a sip Yudol returns the soda to the smiling girl. Yi describes Yudol’s ability to withstand the seduction of the commodity as one of the reasons why Yudol becomes the winner in the competition. Later in the story, when Yudol is forced to become a day laborer for backbreaking work after surviving the flood, Yi describes Yudol as not yet completely obsessed with commodity fetish. Rather, Yi presents Yudol’s transformation into a laborer as a kind of productive process through which he can use his exceptionally strong and capable body for higher wages and guaranteed employment that would contribute to Yudol’s plans to return to Ŭnsin’gol.

Yi contrasts this productive commodification process of the male protagonist with women’s unproductive obsession with consumption of commodities. Throughout the story, Yi portrays Yudol’s only daughter, Ch’unyŏ, as vulnerable to the attraction of commodities and unsuccessful at becoming a productive laborer. Narrating Ch’unyŏ’s experiences in the city after the flood, Yi repeats his binary interpretation of the city and the countryside in which the former

67 Especially, so-called modern girls shaped a widely pervasive perspective of women in the colonial period. See Kwŏn Myŏnga, Yŏksajŏk p’asijŭm: cheguk ŭi p’ant’aji wa chendŏ chŏngch’i [Historical Fascism: The Fantasy of Empire and Gender Politics] (Seoul: Ch’aeksesang, 2005).
is interpreted as a splendid but corrupt place for innocent young ladies, a place filled with desirable commodities such as modern houses, young people, snacks, photos, cosmetics, clothing, and hairstyles. Ultimately, Yi traces how Ch’unyŏ’s lust for new things rapidly descends into moral turpitude through her interaction with urban people, who are represented as corrupt and insincere. In contrast to Yudol, she refuses to go back to her old life since the meaning of home for her has dramatically changed from a self-sufficient peaceful world into a place of lack, “without friends, without cosmetics, without silk fabrics, and without young men.”

Interestingly, Yi implies the absence of mature women as another reason for the young female character’s corruption. Maternal figures who are supposed to play a role in protecting the youth from external threats do not exist in the story. Yudol’s wife and mother had long ago passed away. What fills the void of a protective matriarch are the interventions of male characters, which are at times brave but otherwise rough and violent. In one earlier scene, a young slash-and-burn farmer supplements the role of a guardian. Mansŏkkun, a young innocent slash-and-burn farmer who Yudol foresee as a son-in-law rescues Ch’unyŏ when Pak Tongho, a wood merchant, tries to seduce her through a combination of force and bribery in the form of jewelry. If Mansŏkkun demonstrated valiance, Yudol’s intervention is rather rough and violent. When Yudol happens to see his daughter on a date with a man one night after having relocated to city, he becomes enraged and strikes her on the knee. Yi does not present this punishment as a successful measure with which a male head of household corrects the moral decay of his daughter in an effort to reclaim harmony and peace to his family and rekindle his hopes for a speedy return to his peaceful valley. Instead, Yi provides an unhappy ending. It depicts Yudol’s

70 Yi, “Hwajŏnmin,” 22.
pain as “the strongest loneliness [he felt] in his 40 years” and “resentment toward his wife dying young.”\(^{71}\) In doing so, Yi implies the impossibility of returning home and the tragic future that awaits Yudol as he remains as an urban resident with an imperfect family.

Yi’s sympathetic approach to Yudol’s pessimism is in sharp contrast to In Chŏngsik’s optimism for state’s planned development for the farmers. Yet, not unlike In, Yi, through Yudol’s character, also represents slash-and-burn farmers as helpless, disappearing non-agents who blame their tragic fate on the will of god and nature not the social structures of the state and the market economy. In the final scene, Yudol laments the heavens. “Without the mischief of the heaven, this tragedy would not have happened!”\(^{72}\) To be sure, Yudol is brimming with emotions, but Yi, narrating the story in the third-person, is the only one able to interpret and comment on the tragedy. In sum, neither In nor Yi close the gap between themselves and the marginalized people, those who have agency to represent versus those who needs representation. In this sense, Kim Saryang’s story, examined in the last section, demonstrates a more critical approach to the issue of representation.

**Impossibility of Representation: Kim Saryang’s Critique of the Will to Rescue**

Kim Saryang (1914-1950) was another writer who paid close attention to the slash-and-burn farmers as well as other subaltern figures in Korea like the urban poor.\(^{73}\) When he was a young college student at the prestigious Imperial University of Tokyo, he had made visits to slash-and-

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\(^{71}\) Yi, “Hwajŏnmin,” 23.

\(^{72}\) Yi, “Hwajŏnmin,” 23.

\(^{73}\) For more detailed biography and works of Kim, see Kim Chaeyong & Kwak Hyŏngdŏk eds. & trans., *Kim Saryang chakp’um kwa yŏn’gu* vol. 1 & 2 [Kim Saryang’s Works and Studies on His Works] (Seoul: Yŏngnak, 2008 & 2009).
burn farming areas and serialized a travelogue in Korean in Tonga ilbo in 1935. In 1940, he wrote another travelogue in Korean, titled Three Hours in a Mountain House (San’ga sam sigan). Emerging out of these travelogues, his short story, Deep in the Bush, which was written in Japanese, stands as a pinnacle of his attention to slash-and-burn farmers. But ultimately, the narrative is similar to his other travelogues. The story traces the travel route and interiority of a young male medical student who traverses deep into the forest, an unknown world to him, to meet slash-and-burn farmers and help them. Kim shapes his protagonist, Pak Insik, as a liberal subject who approaches the farmers with rationality and scientific sensibilities—globally circulated twin values, indispensable for modern subjectivity. On the one hand, as a prestigious medical student studying in Tokyo, Insik sees slash-and-burn farmers as objects of his scientific research, for his aim is to investigate the hygienic practices of mountain villagers and to provide basic medical treatment. On the other hand, Kim depicts Insik as a sensitive young man who feels differently even toward “a handful of earth and grass.” Slash-and-burn farmers become the object of Insik’s liberal empathy. In the story, Kim describes how this liberal elite attempt to distinguish himself from different positions held by two other characters he meets on his trip: first, an old monk whose hope is to save the farmers by moving them away from their

74 Kim Saryang, “San’gok ūi such’dop” [Notebook of Mountain Valleys], Tonga ilbo, Apr. 21 to 28, 1935.
79 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 100.
ascribed tragic reality to a nowhere land of happiness, and second, a local governor who is
resolved to manage slash-and-burn farmers with violence and authoritative rule of law. By
casting a doubtful eye on all of their positions, including Insik’s liberal stance, Kim posed the
fundamental question of whether or not subalterns can be represented in the first place and their
life be improved by governmental intervention.\(^80\)

The first position criticized by Kim is a religious view that sought to save the
marginalized people by guiding them to utopia. When Insik goes deep into the slash-and-burn
farming area, he sojourns for a night in an old decaying temple. There Insik meets an old monk
and a middle-aged man who believes the monk to be a saint with powers to bring about longevity
and protection from disease and disaster. The conversation between Insik and the man reveals
the monk’s desire to save the slash-and-burn farmers. Insik asks, “For what are you practicing?”
To this question, the man answers: “It is to save the hopeless.” He continues, “If you believe in
the teachings of my great teacher, when the judgment of water comes in the near future all the
people in the world will drown. But we will be guided into the Palace of Water Protection in Mt.
Kùmgang, where we will reincarnate as mountain gods. Moreover, the judgment of fire is just
around the corner.”\(^81\) Kim Saryang’s questioning of this religious will to rescue the farmers is
done through the eyes of an expert, Insik, who is armed with rationality and modern science. As
a medical student, a believer of science, Insik is adamant that the two men in the temple are
parasitic pseudo-religious figures pandering to the miserable lives of ignorant slash-and-burn

\(^{81}\) Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 110.
farmers with the impossible promise of an afterlife in “the country of happiness.” Indeed, at the ending of this story Insik discovers the horrible news that the head of this religion, called Paekpaekko, and his followers stole food and property of slash-and-burn farmers through deceit, and even raped and killed 314 people.

Kim is equally critical toward the state. In the beginning of the story, Insik meets his uncle, the local county governor who embodies the authority of the colonial state. In the description of tensions between these two men—young and old, Kim criticizes the governor’s position as authoritative, violent, bureaucratic, and corrupt vis-à-vis the sensitive and empathetic Insik. Above all, the governor views slash-and-burn farmers as nothing but objects to manage and control. Unlike Insik who display empathy for the farmers, the governor does not express any emotions toward them. Rather, he sees slash-and-burn farmers as an inferior human group and only as outlaws who illegally occupy national forests and commit arson. Even worse, at times, the governor considers them as non-humans, loathingly calling them “beasts (chikushō).”

Through Insik, Kim delivers his critique of the violent rule of the state that relies on bureaucratic technique of governmentality. The governor represents the farmers as numbers without any human face much like in In Chŏngsik’s report. The governor regards statistics on slash-and-burn farmers as a barometer to judge the effectiveness of his administration in forest supervision, whose mandate is to evacuate all the slash-and-burn farmers from his county. The

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82 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 111.
83 This news is based on a real story happened in 1937. The incident aroused a huge sensation in the late colonial period as an example of showing lack of enlightenment and scientific attitude in colonial Korea. For more details about the incident, see Chŏn Ponggwan, Kyŏngsŏng kidam: kündae Chosŏn ül twihündŭn sarin sagŏn kwa sŏk’ae’nŭl [Kyŏngsŏng Strange Stories: Murders and Scandals that Shook Modern Korea (Seoul: Sallim, 2006).
84 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 104.
governor advises Insik, “College students like you cannot understand, but, at any rate, numbers are important for the government office.” As an advocate for numbers, he is very proud of the dwindling slash-and-burn farmer population in his county, down to one fifth of the total under the former governor. Kim criticizes such bureaucratic solution by pointing out that the expelled slash-and-burn farmers simply relocated to other counties where supervision is less strict.

One specific scene distills Kim’s critique of the governor’s bureaucratic, brutal, and violent nature. The governor gives a speech in Japanese, not in Korean, in front of a group of Korean mountain villagers who are forced to listen to his speech on the need to abolish the custom of wearing white clothes. The governor rebukes wearing white clothes by pointing to the practice as the reason for the poverty of Koreans. To wear it, he insists, is “uneconomical because white clothing gets dirty easily and it takes both money and time to clean.” Against this utilitarian rationale, Kim points out the discrepancy between the governor’s discourse and reality. Because the clothes of the villagers are too old and dirty, the color resembles “soil.” The only white cloth in the scene is the white pants of the internal affairs manager, who is Japanese. Insik asks himself, “For the people gathering here, does it matter whether clothing is white or black? This is totally insane.” Kim’s critique of the state through the governor reaches its apex when he describes the state as the exclusive holder of more direct and violent measures

85 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 98.
86 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 104.
87 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 94. During the colonial period, in particular, in the wartime, white clothes of Korean people were the symbol of Korean people and a major target of everyday life reform. See Kong Cheuk, “Ilche ū ūibok t’ongje wa ‘kungmin’ mandŭlgi: paegūi t’anap mit kungminbok changnyŏ rŭl chungsimŭro” [Clothing Control of the Japanese Empire in Korea and the Making of “Citizen”: With a Focus on Suppression of White Clothes and Promotion of National Suits], Sahoe wa yŏksa 67 (June 2005): 41-83.
88 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 95.
89 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 95.
beyond a verbal persuasion. In the following scene, Insik gets furious at the governor and his staff for throwing black paint onto the white clothes of the villagers.

The greatest strength of Kim’s story lies not in his critique of religion and the state but in his critique of even Insik’s position, which is deemed ambivalent and indecisive. Above all, despite Insik’s hostility toward his uncle, his resistance is not materialized but remains only in his thought. For instance, Kim describes the moment when Insik’s anger toward the governor’s violent attitude finally erupts as he encounters the outcry of a woman whose white clothes has been drenched in black paint by the laughing staff of the governor. Yet, Kim also depicts the limits of Insik’s anger. As an introverted young man, Kim describes that Insik could not bring himself to confront this violence with bravery. Instead, all he does is “calm his trembling heart by closing his eyes in silence” and “covering his face with both hands.” This meek attitude is sharply contrasted with his former self. Kim reminds us that in the past Insik used to be a fearless student who confronted injustice head on and even led a nationalist protest against the school.

The speech scene can be read not only as Kim’s nationalist critique of colonial policy of restricting Korean customs and language but also as a scene that speaks to the ambivalent position of Kim himself as a writer working in both Japanese and Korean. Kim wrote in Korean as well, but the majority of his works were written in Japanese. His career as a writer was so successful that he became the first Korean writer to make the final list of the Akutagawa prize, one of the most venerable prizes in Japanese literature, but his works were filled with his own agony as a colonized intellectual speaking to the Japanese audience in the metropole. For this reason, he has been occasionally mentioned as an exemplary figure embodying the identity crisis

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90 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 106.
of intellectuals negotiating the diglossic situation in the late colonial period. In this story, Kim describes this heterolingual situation in critical yet ambivalent tone. For Kim, it is farcical and grotesque that the governor, believing in the authority of the official language, makes the speech in Japanese to Korean villagers who cannot understand the language. Yet, Kim’s critique is also ambivalent. When Insik criticizes the governor’s speech, Insik does so only from his position as a colonial elite, a person who can speak fluent Japanese thanks to his education at a prestigious institution in the metropole. From this elite vantage point, Insik criticizes the awkward pronunciation and diction of the governor who has never studied in the metropole, let alone obtained the minimum level of education fit for the governor position.

Kim’s most fundamental critique is that Insik is undifferentiated from the state, for Insik and the state share the same modern values such as rationality, law, science, hygiene, and economy. Insik’s criticism of the governor is not governing in and of itself, but the inappropriate ways of governing—its violence and lack of empathy. As a modern expert, for instance, Insik does not deny the benefits of dyed clothes for economic and hygienic reasons. He simply opposes the brutal and bureaucratic methods employed to realize such ideals; instead, he hopes for a more liberal, empathetic, and lawful modes of governing. Throughout the story, Kim points out that Insik’s social position as an elite medical student armed with modern knowledge makes him resemble the state more than the farmers. The position of Insik as a man of modern knowledge is easily seen in his initial encounter with a slash-and-burn farmer’s house. When he finds the dilapidated shanty house, he enters and proceeds to describe the interior of the house from the perspective of a hygienic, scientific discourse: “Inside there are some broken pots and

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92 For instance, see Chapter 3 and 4 of Hwang Hodŏk, Pŏlle wa cheguk [Insects and Empire] (Seoul: Saemulgyŏl, 2011).
93 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 94.
few dirty bowls, and an A-frame carrier (chigye) stands next to a small basket. Looking at the dark room, he cannot see any decent household items. With a foul smell of decay in the air, flies aflutter with buzzing noise and bizarre looking paper talismans written in ink are attached disorderly on the mud wall.”

Kim also describes how Insik portrays slash-and-burn farmers as a kind of an animal—not too different from the governor’s usage of “beasts” in spite of Insik’s less derogative connotation. When Insik finds a girl and a younger boy without shoes or shirts crying before him, a stranger, he describes the girl’s hair as a “bird’s nest.” When Insik approaches them, they scurry away “like rats.”

Kim correctly points out the unequal position between Insik as a social elite and the slash-and-burn farmers as marginalized, no matter how much Insik wants to argue for the equality between himself and the farmers or the depth of his empathy for them. One the most striking feature is that Insik never meets any adult farmers. Insik keeps moving between the valleys and finds houses, but can never see any people except the two “rat-like” and “bird-like” children. The only adult slash-and-burn farmers that he can see, but not meet, are two or three men and women “crawling” in distance, but they, too, quickly run away from him when he approaches them.

Another feature of Kim’s story is his recognition of the agency of the farmers. Kim uses their evasion as an important metaphor to reject any intervention by the state and the modern elite. Slash-and-burn famers are constantly depicted as running away from Insik who they assume is a government official conducting a forest supervision. While Insik seeks to distinguish himself from the state in the view of the adult farmers, Insik is never differentiated from the

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95 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 108.
state. The farmers’ circumvention of authorities in the form of running needs to be interpreted as not simply a capitulation of power to higher forces but indeed an exertion of agency. In a similar manner, smoke and shadow also symbolize the farmers’ evanescent and phantom-like quality for deftly escaping the modern rule of both the state and the social elite. The smoke from fires that slash-and-burn farmers set to forest are the only clue for Insik to track the farmers, yet whenever Insik arrives, no adults are there and the houses are empty. As a result, he cannot conduct any meaningful research on the farmers.

Even if we suppose the possibility of Insik’s meeting with slash-and-burn farmers face-to-face, it is doubtful whether he can deliver his intention through equal communication in his national Korean language or in the imperialist Japanese language. Kim’s story necessitates a more sophisticated reading, moving beyond a focus on the dichotomy of national vs. imperial, Korean and Japanese, into a more nuanced account about the relationships between state vs. non-state or the elite vs. the marginalized. In his research on the upland peoples of Southeast Asia, James C. Scott reads the people’s absence of written scripts not as a sign of backwardness or uncivilization but as a strategy of endless flight to leave no traces that can be decoded by the state.97 In his interview about his visit to slash-and-burn farming areas, Son Chint’ae, a famous folklorist and historian in the colonial period invoked a similar point, stating, “they were able to understand what I said, but I couldn’t understand them.”98 Kim Saryang hints at the possibility that Korean slash-and-burn farmers adopted a similar strategy to avoid the language of the elite and state. In the story, slash-and-burn farmers do not speak any words decodable through

Japanese and Korean. When Insik visits the house of the two children, Insik address them in words, but “there is no answer.” Kim depicts Insik’s efforts to communicate with the crying children when he ensures them that he is “not a dangerous person at all” and with the invitation, “Please come to me. You don’t have to cry.” And yet, Kim also shows that Insik’s good intention fails to be delivered to the children who run away, crying “Mom, Mom!” In fact, this is the only written voice of the farmers in the story. Unlike Insik, slash-and-burn farmers in the story does not speak in a modern language comprehensible to the state and experts. But this does not simply mean that farmers in the story cannot speak for themselves. Rather, their silence can be interpreted as their rejection of any and all representation and the impossible task of representing the marginalized.

Ultimately, Kim’s story illustrates the difficulty of growth in the colonial setting through the case of a colonial male protagonist who fails to transform himself into a mature subject who can represent his fellow citizens. In the story, Insik never meets any farmers. Consequently, he cannot achieve the ideals of liberal governance that which he believed to be possible through scientific, hygienic research and benevolent medical treatment on the farmers. He fails to distinguish his position from that of the state. He fails to become an empathetic figure since his empathy remains only a thought without ever reaching out to the farmers. And he also fails to become a decisive subject, a trait equated with ideal masculinity. In the story, Insik runs away at every crucial moment and remains hesitant, indecisive, and ambivalent, oscillating between colony and metropole, elite and marginalized. Insik has a chance to confront the farmers face-to-face, but interestingly, Insik also runs away due to fear. On the night spent with the Paekpaekkyo monk, he sees a religious gathering attended by a group of men and women in the yard of the old

100 Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 107.
temple, but again, all he can do is to steal glimpse of their *shadows* through a peep-hole in the paper window. Overwhelmed by their fervent worship, replete with chanting and crying, he does not have the courage to stand in front of them. Instead, he leaves the temple, as if he was “running away.”\(^{101}\) In the epilogue, after a few years have passed since his fruitless trip, Kim does not give Insik any sign of maturation. Insik graduates from his medical school and opens his own clinic, believing he can be faithful to his “heavenly endowed profession.”\(^{102}\) Yet, Kim still describes Insik as an immature, sentimental figure completely absorbed by sorrow. In choosing to depict Insik as stunted in the colonial setting as the parting image, Kim provides a poignant critique of not only the historicist, developmentalist, and imperial logic underpinning the classical genre of Bildungsroman in general,\(^{103}\) but also the wartime Korean intellectuals’ misguided attempt to rescue the marginalized Korean farmers.

**Conclusion**

Under the name of total mobilization, the wartime regime on the Korean homefront attempted to penetrate the everyday lives of the rural population down to the most minute detail. The increasing attention to slash-and-burn farmers during the war years was part of such encroachment. The number of slash-and-burn farmers and their production accounted for no less than 10 percent of the Korean population as well as agricultural production. Yet, in the purview of the total war regime, even the most marginalized became an object of scrutiny and a subject for reform. During the wartime, the regime approached slash-and-burn farmers, or rather,

\(^{101}\) Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 112.

\(^{102}\) Kim, “Kusa Fukashi,” 112.

(re)discovered them as the subject of wartime development for efficient agricultural production and also as the object of biopolitical and social intervention. Against this background, the three colonial intellectuals examined in this chapter sought to represent the marginalized people. Undercutting the totalitarian ethos of the period, however, their stances toward the farmers did not converge into a unifying view. Rather, their portrayals reveal different opinions and tensions between various social relations from the state and population to the metropole and the colony, the rural and the urban, the social elite and the marginalized, and male and female. In his scientific representation of slash-and-burn farmers as unproductive and helpless, the agricultural expert, In Chŏngsik advocated the state-led plans for relocation and economic development as a viable solution for higher productivity and a better future for the farmers. On the contrary, the writer Yi Pungmyŏng doubted In’s optimism by presenting a fictional character, whose transformation from a happy rural resident into a productive yet unhappy laborer in the city portend a very different future. Despite their different takes on development, both intellectuals positioned themselves as social elites who had the responsibility and resources to represent and save their less fortunate countrymen. Unlike these two intellectuals, Kim Saryang asked a more fundamental question of whether slash-and-burn farmers could even be represented and rescued by the wartime biopolitical regime when there was no clear-cut distinction between the violent state and rational elites.

Unfortunately, unlike these intellectuals, slash-and-burn farmers did not possess the power or the privilege to speak for themselves in the modern tongue, save for sporadic mentions in newspapers about their uprisings against the government’s plan such as the Kapsan Incident in 1929. As a result, this research takes a strategy of focusing less on representations of their life and history than on intellectuals’ efforts to represent them. Simultaneously, this research reads slash-and-burn farmers’ silence and flight not as their yielding to a superior force but as a willful
act and a mode of defiance to exert power of their own. As a social group, slash-and-burn farmers disappeared in the course of rapid industrialization in 1960s and 1970s South Korea. More research is needed on the history of the farmers in the DPRK, but the situation seems to be similar to its southern counterpart. Narrating this change should not resort to the familiar story of a linear process of industrialization or of state expansions but excavating a more complicated process that sheds light on competing opinions including the voices of the farmers.

Chapter 3 will undertake a similar task to examine the alliance between the colonial state and the social elites in their stance toward the Korean population, yet the chapter turns to different types of elites and themes: nutritional scientists on food consumption. By examining mainly Japanese nutritional scientists who were eager to improve the diet and health of the colonial population as much as their Korean counterpart, Chapter 3 will paint a more complicated picture of wartime food politics through the issue of race and nation.

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From April to July 1940, when the Japanese empire expanded its frontier into China, a group of 20 Korean and Japanese medical students of Keijō [Seoul] Imperial University conducted a graduation research project on the urban poor, whose growing number in the colonial capital aroused social concerns about poverty, hygiene, and health in Korea.1 As the name of the population under examination, *t’omangmin* (mud hut dwellers), implies, substandard housing conditions served as a basis for poverty in the research, but insufficient diet was no less noticeable among the researchers’ subjects. In the most extreme cases, the students witnessed people consuming just steamed barley without any side dishes and with only the addition of a little mixed salt and pepper. The researchers bemoaned, “[I]t is easy to imagine how distasteful their meals are. Nonetheless, it is more urgent for them to fill their mouths and stomachs regardless of taste.”2 Similar observations already saturated journalistic reports on the urban poor throughout the 1930s, yet what differentiated this 1940 research from other writings was its scientific language. Particularly, the language of nutritional science played a central role in the 1940 report. For instance, the medical students translated the typical main dish of the urban poor into a single abstract number: 2,620 calories. Similarly, the students reduced the more complicated and varied composition of side dishes to another manageable number: 154 calories.3 They then interpreted these nutritional values according to the latest theory of nutritional science.

1 Keijō teikoku daigaku eisei chōsabu eds., *Domakumin no seikatsu eisei* [The Life and Hygiene of the Pauper Class in Korean Cities] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1942). For more details about the urban poor, see Kang Man’gil’’s research, *Ilche sidae pinmin saenghwalssa yôn’gu* [A Study on the Living of the Poor in the Colonial Period] (Seoul: Ch’angjak kwa pip ‘yŏnsa, 1987).
2 Keijō teikoku daigaku eisei chōsabu eds., *Domakumin no seikatsu eisei*, 157.
3 Keijō teikoku daigaku eisei chōsabu eds., *Domakumin no seikatsu eisei*, 196-7.
as well as in comparison with other global cases. The students delivered a rather surprising interpretation, given what readers might have expected from the meager diet. Their research stated, “calorie intake of the mud hut dwellers is not inferior to the general level” of three other cases in Japan—2,506 calories for a salary man, 2,614 for a manual laborer, and 3,265 for a farmer. The problem, however, was a shortage of other nutritional values. The students explained:

Established theory of nutritional science states that nutrition is dominated not only by the high and low of total calories but also by the combination of carbohydrates, protein, fat and other nutrients inside the food. … Judging from the general deficit of protein and fat in their side dishes, it is not unreasonable to conclude that their diet is incomplete in terms of nutritional science.

As such, through the assessment of nutritional science the diet of one of the lowest social groups in Korea acquired its scientific status as “incomplete.”

Thanks to its scientific authority in quantifying diet, wartime nutrition studies like this 1940 research have provided empirical data sets for scholars on wartime Korean eating habits. With this data, alongside other official statistics, previous scholarship has shaped a well-known historical narrative that Korean diets worsened during the war years due to the policy of the Japanese empire. While this chapter shares the same critical stance toward colonialism, its interest is not in developing upon this narrative with the empirical data sets of wartime studies. Instead, it aims to investigate nutrition studies as a political discourse that framed the perceived insufficiency of wartime Korean diets as a social problem in need of improvement through

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5 Keijō teikoku daigaku eisei chōsabu eds., Domakumin no seikatsu eisei, 162. Emphasis added.
governmental intervention. Rather than being objective, wartime nutrition studies were part of a wartime biopolitical regime aimed at mobilizing the biggest colonial population in the Japanese empire.

As recent critical scholarship overwhelmingly suggests, nutritional science is not an empirical, objective, apolitical body of knowledge, but indeed a part of modern governmental technologies of managing population, labor, diet, and health in the most scientifically efficient manner.  

Across the tumultuous events of the early twentieth century, from the First World War and the Russian Revolution to the Great Depression and the Second World War, nutritional science played a pivotal role in shaping policy on hunger, malnutrition, and social insecurity by national/colonial governments and transnational organizations such as the League of Nations Health Organization and the Rockefeller Foundation.  

Crucial to this mode of governmental intervention was nutritional science’s quantitative approach to diet. As nutritional scientists came to identify the specific physiological functions of different nutrients for the health of the human body, good eating acquired a scientific meaning as a utilitarian behavior of consuming required nutritional values in the most efficient way. Nutrition studies translated complicated local diets varying according to race, gender, class, and age into standardized universal numbers of nutritional values like calories, proteins, and vitamins. With these numbers, diverse governmental players in the 20th century engaged everyday diet as a technical matter of

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providing minimum nutritional requirements in the most efficient manner through governing technologies such as vitamin fortified foods, collective canteens, school lunch programs, and rationing.⁹

Building on this scholarship, this chapter investigates the political implications of wartime nutritional science on Korean diets. Scholarship on wartime nutritional science tends to focus on a unidirectional flow in which the state mobilized nutrition experts to extract Korean foodstuffs. Yet we can illuminate the opposite direction, too, with a focus on how nutritional scientists shaped wartime state food measures. First, this chapter explores how wartime nutrition studies provided a scientific framework and data for wartime state management. Comprised by a loosely bound group of nutrition scientists, biochemists, and doctors—both Korean and Japanese—wartime nutrition studies translated Korean diets into scientific numbers and identified nutritional problems therein. Through scientific knowledge, the state assessed the current status of the colonial population. Far from being objective, secondly, the knowledge gleaned from wartime nutrition studies shaped an ambivalent array of scientific racial discourses of the colonial population. On the one hand, nutrition experts enlisted both scientific evidence and evolutionary terms in order to define colonial Korean diets as inferior, lacking, or incomplete in comparison to Japan and elsewhere. On the other hand, experts considered such “inferior” colonial diets as an object for sympathy and improvement against the backdrop of wartime mobilization. Medical students researching the urban poor felt a moral responsibility as the elites of the empire, expressing their aim as “first, touching the reality of Korea” and “second, contributing to saving these tragic people.”¹⁰ For the students, who defined themselves as those

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⁹ Cullather, The Hungry World and Vernon, Hunger.
¹⁰ Keijō teidai igakubu tokushu saimin chōsakai, “Domakumin no seikatsu eisei: esikatsu chōsa (dai ippō)” [The Life and Hygiene of the Pauper Class in Korean Cities: The First Report], Chōsen sōtoku chōsa geppō [The GGK
“residing in Korea and studying in Korea,” Korea was the object of “love,” “responsibility,” and “prestige.” This chapter stresses, thirdly, that nutrition experts, with such colonialist and elitist sympathies toward the population, advocated wartime state intervention like market control and school lunch programs. The political choices of nutritional experts will be explained not simply as an outcome of their fanatic patriotism or top-down state coercion but as a consequence of their acceptance of the state as the most rational technology to provide the most nutritious diet in the most efficient manner.

Nutrition Studies on Korean Diets during Wartime Mobilization

From the beginning, nutrition studies in and on Korea developed as a transnational knowledge system for managing the colonial population. One of the earliest studies on Korean diets was one conducted by a missionary, J. D. van Buskirk, in 1922. In the 1920s and 1930s, nutrition studies in Korea blossomed as part of the medical research conducted by an increasing number of transnational experts, Korean and Japanese, who studied abroad and came to occupy positions in the expanding modern institutes such as Keijō Imperial University (Est. 1924), Keijō Medical College (Est. 1916) and Severance Medical College (Est. 1886 as Chejungwŏn). Studies on the diet, nutrition, and health of the Korean population were published in specialized journals, both in the colony as well as the metropole. In addition to these journals, newspapers and public

Survey Monthly] 10, no. 10 (Dec. 1940), 22.
11 Keijō teikoku daigaku eisei chōsabu eds., Domakumin no seikatsu eisei, 1.
13 Yu Hyŏngsik, Han’guk kŭndae ŭihak yŏn’gusa (1910-1945) [The History of the Modern Medical Research in Korea, 1910-1945] (Seoul: Han’guk ŭihakwŏn, 2001) provides a comprehensive list of medical magazines and their articles published in the colonial period. For more details about medicine in colonial Korea, see Sonja M. Kim,
magazines (particularly women’s magazines) popularized the specialized jargon of nutritional science into an understandable language for ordinary people.  

The colonial state, too, engaged closely with the early development of nutritional science in Korea in order to keep costs down in its management of the colonial population. This utilitarian objective was encapsulated in a body of research on prisoners in Seoul. Serialized between 1925 and 1932 in ten volumes, this became a monumental work on Korean dietary patterns in the 1920s and the early 1930s. With an aim to know “whether the current food given to prisoners is appropriate in terms of health,” the colonial state hired a research team led by Satō Kozō, a specialist in medical biochemistry at Keijō Medical College. Among the studies produced by Satō’s team, Hirokawa Kosaburō’s research in the first volume exemplifies nutritional science’s close tie with the utilitarian approach of the state with regard to the health of Koreans. Hirokawa interpreted the role of government in dealing with prisoners as not simply


15 Chŏsen sŏtokufu hŏmukyoku gyŏkeika [The Department of Criminal Administration, the Ministry of Justice of the GGK] ed., Chŏsen ni okeru jukeisha no eiyō narabini shinchin taisha ni kansuru kenkyū [Study on the Nutrition and Metabolism of the Prisoners in Korea], Vol. 1-10 (Keijō: Chŏsen chikei kyŏkai [Korean Association of Criminal Punishment], 1925-1932).

16 The prefect of Chŏsen sŏtokufu hŏmukyoku gyŏkeika ed., Chŏsen ni okeru jukeisha no eiyō narabini shinchin taisha ni kansuru kenkyū daikkai hŏkoku Vol. 1 (Keijō: Chŏsen chikei kyŏkai, 1925).

17 As an influential figure in medicine in Korea, Satō published one of the earliest research on Korean diet such as Satō Kozō, “Chŏsen no shokumotsu” [Korean Food], Chŏsen kagakkai kaihō [The Journal of Korean Chemistry Association] 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1929): 5-12.

penal but also managerial. While he argued that, “states have a responsibility to punish criminals,” he added a caveat; “authorities have to protect their bodies and provide healthy food (hokenshoku) appropriate for maintaining the health of the body.” The key element for Hirokawa was efficiency in terms of cost. He clarified this point, stressing the significance of his research as “seeking a way to acquire sufficient nutrition through foodstuffs whose price is as cheap as possible.” With this utilitarian mindset, Hirokawa produced detailed data on the marginalized population, even to the third decimal, revealing his obsession with the correctness of scientific quantification. On average, he computed, one prisoner consumed 165.229 grams of protein, 75.658 grams of fat, 647.088 grams of carbohydrates, and 4033.986 calories. After comparing the data with other case studies of prisoners in Germany and Japan, he reassured the authorities that Korean prisoners’ diets were sufficient to maintain their health.

Nutritional scientific studies not only covered the diet of the most marginalized groups but also expanded into various other sections of the Korean society based on class, gender, and

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Korean Strait in 1916 to study in Keijō Medical College until 1920. Since he became an assistant professor in medical biochemistry of the same school in 1926, he worked as a crucial figure of nutrition research on Koreans until the collapse of the empire to publish more than 20 articles on Korean diets. http://db.history.go.kr/ assessed on Feb. 13, 2016.

19 Chōsen sōtokufu hōmukyoku gyōkeika ed., Chōsen ni okeru jukeisha no eiyō narabini shinchin taisha ni kansuru kenkyū, Vol. 1, 2.
21 Chōsen sōtokufu hōmukyoku gyōkeika ed., Chōsen ni okeru jukeisha no eiyō narabini shinchin taisha ni kansuru kenkyū, Vol. 1, 144-157. These high calories and other nutrition is because of intensive labor given to prisoners. Clearly reflecting the relationship between labor and diet, the prison provided different diet menu, divided into 10 varieties, according to labor intensity. To be more specific, the special grade diet menu for moving soil per day consisted of 239.920 grams of proteins, 105.917 grams of fats, 925.634 grams of carbohydrates, and 5762.874 calories. On the opposite spectrum lay the lowest grade menu for no work consisting of 103.789 grams of proteins, 45.999 grams of fats, 387.886 grams of carbohydrates, and 2443.649 calories.
22 Chōsen sōtokufu hōmukyoku gyōkeika ed., Chōsen ni okeru jukeisha no eiyō narabini shinchin taisha ni kansuru kenkyū, Vol. 1, 166.
Despite the variety of the subjects of research, all the studies revealed common features of nutritional science, first, the efficiency-centered approach of managing diet, health, and cost; second, the scientific methodologies of quantifying local diet in the universal language; and third, the scientific authority to determine the appropriateness of diet. With these modern features of nutritional science lay the precedent for wartime research on the diet of the colonized population after the break of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937.

Nutrition studies on Korean diets flourished during war, as the colonial state had been extremely interested in mobilizing Koreans as labor power for the expanding war economy. Accordingly, increasing healthy labor power became one of the top priorities of the state. Yet, statistics on the Korean population sent warning signals. In terms of sheer quantity, the Korean population was still rising in numbers from 20.26 million in 1930 to 21.89 million in 1935 and 23.71 million in 1940. However, many indexes aroused fears about the so-called quality of the population, invoking the language of “degeneracy” to articulate their concerns. Above all, statistics ranked Korea as one of the world’s worst in terms of life expectancy and child mortality. A life expectancy table made in 1939, based on the 1935 national census, showed that only 61.9 percent of Korean male new-born infants and 64.6 percent of females could survive until 7 years old. One statistics publication put out by the Korean Society of Welfare stated that

23 For example, in the same volume, Yi Sŏksin, a dual PhD degree holder from Berlin and Kyoto in medicine, analyzed the diet of what he categorized as middle-class people, eighteen female nurses, and upper-class people, four male doctors. Yi Sŏksin, “Chŏsenjin no kanshushoku ni tsuite no kenkyū” [A Study on the Dietary Customs] in Chŏsen ni okeru juyeisha no eiyō narabini shinshin taisha ni kansuru kenkyū, ed., Chŏsen sŏtokufu hŏmyokukyoku gyŏkeika, Vol. 9 (Chŏsen chikei kyōkai, 1931), 87-211. In terms of age, Hirokawa analyzed 100 lunch boxes of primary school children, categorized by male and female. Hirokawa Kosaburō, “Hutsū gakkō (Chŏsen shōgakkō) jidō no benō” [Lunch Boxes of Primary School Children (Korean Primary School)], Keijō igaku senmon gakkō kiyō 4 no. 5 (May 1934): 197-225.


26 Ch’oe Hŭiyŏng, “Chŏsen jūmin no seimeihyŏ” [The Life Table of Koreans], Chŏsen iggakai zasshi 29 no. 11.
in 1938 infant mortality below the age of one surpassed 10 percent for the first time in the history of Japanese rule—demonstrating the worsening of conditions over time.\textsuperscript{27} The book included data that over 500 thousand estimated people in 1940 of whose majority were young people around 30 years old suffered from tuberculosis.\textsuperscript{28} Rather than remaining in specialized journals and books, these scientific numbers were circulated in the public media, giving a gloomy impression of the future of Koreans, especially in comparison with other countries. For instance, a journalist at one of the largest newspapers in Korea, Tonga Daily, worried that Korean life expectancy—currently calculated as 36.30 years for men and 37.53 years for women—was not only twenty years shorter than rich countries in the West—Britain, after all was at 55.62 and 59.58 for men and women respectively—but also ten years shorter than Japanese in the metropole, who had life expectancies of 46.18 and 47.68 for men and women.\textsuperscript{29}

In response to these warning signals about Korean health, nutrition experts discussed the nutritional deficit as a crucial determining factor in the deteriorating health of the Korean population, along with other elements such as fatigue, lack of sanitation, and a shortage of modern hospitals. The author of the aforementioned life table, Ch’oe Hŭiyŏng, a professor of medicine at Keijō Imperial University, associated malnutrition directly with the poor indicators regarding the health of Koreans.\textsuperscript{30} In a similar manner, the dietician Chang Sanghong attributed

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\footnotesize (Nov. 1939), 94. \\
\textsuperscript{27} Chōsen kōsei kyōkai ed., Chōsen ni okeru jinkō ni kansuru shotōkei [Statistics on Population in Korea] (Keijō: Chōsen kōsei kyōkai, 1943), 94. \\
\textsuperscript{28} Chōsen kōsei kyōkai ed., Chōsen ni okeru jinkō ni kansuru shotōkei, 98. \\
\textsuperscript{29} Yang Chaeha, “Chosŏnin ui ch’ewi hyŏnhwang kwa kú hyangsangch’aek” [The Current Status of Korean Physique and the Way to Improve It], Tonga ilbo [East Asia Daily], Jan. 4, 1940. \\
\textsuperscript{30} Ch’oe Hŭiyŏng, “Kokumin taei kŏjŏ ni oyo bosu eiyŏ no shimei” [The Mission of Nutrition for the Improvement of National Citizens’ Physique], Kokumin seikatsu ronsō [Collection of Writings on National Living] 2 (June 1941), 33.
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the reason for high infant mortality to the malnutrition of pregnant women.31 Once the health of the Korean population was associated with malnutrition as such, the population problem became a food problem and a nutrition problem: that is, a matter of how to provide Koreans with sufficient food and nutrition.

The colonial state positioned itself as the political institution responsible for guaranteeing sufficient food and nutrition for the colonial population. In November 1940, the GGK established the Bureau of Health and Welfare (Husaengguk or Kōseikyoku in Japanese) as a unified bureau for public health, hygiene, housing, labor, and recreation, in parallel with expanding welfare measures and institutes in the metropole like the Ministry of Health and Welfare (Kōseishō, established in 1940).32 When the Konoe cabinet declared its wartime vision as the “national defense state” (kokubō kokka) in July 1940, the empire demanded imperial subjects including Koreans to sacrifice their peacetime standards of living for victory. At the same time, however, one of the goals of national defense was set as “guaranteeing substantial and healthy national living.”33 “Reckless suppression” of food consumption would lead to a “disaster for the next generations,” stated a nutritionist of the Institute of Health and Welfare Science (Kōsei kagaku kenkyūjo) in the Ministry of Health and Welfare.34 Despite the necessity of wartime austerity, he argued, the state needed to play a role in guaranteeing the minimum level of living standards for “energetic power for tomorrow.”35 As a minimum, he presented 2,400 kcal and 80 grams of protein per day for normal Japanese males in mid-intensity labor or

31 Chang Sanghong, “Ilssaeng kŏn’gang āl chhau hanŭn ŏrini yŏngyang munje” [The Children’s Nutrition Problem that Affects the Lifetime Health], Tonga ilbo, Mar. 13, 1940.
33 “Chŏngbu palp’yo” [Announcement of the Government], Tonga ilbo, Aug. 2, 1940.
2,000 kcal and 70 grams of protein on average for Japanese in consideration of age, gender, and occupation.\textsuperscript{36} Although this state officer did not explicitly mention who could be included under the title of Japanese, he implicitly applied the same amounts to the colonial population given the fact that his article was published in a journal on Korean laborers.

The problem was how to determine the most efficient way to provide nutritious foods to Koreans under wartime conditions characterized by decreasing production and imports due to droughts, material shortages, and logistic difficulties.\textsuperscript{37} Korean dietician Chang Sanghong, for instance, recognized the challenge for Korea as making unlimited healthy labor with limited food resources in the most efficient way. He asked, “After lowering the level of the national living standard, what should we do to maintain a vigorous production force for the economy and further increase our labor power?”\textsuperscript{38} This was not only the question of a single dietician but also a concern to diverse groups across the political, social, and scientific spectrum, and indeed the general question hanging over Korea.

Current scholarship has examined major institutional changes in Japanese colonial state regulation including rations aimed at efficient food consumption and distribution.\textsuperscript{39} Yet, the scholarship has paid less attention to the relationship between nutritional science and institutional changes during the wartime. Aware of the importance of nutritional science for food policy, the

\textsuperscript{36} Ōiso, “Senji saitei seikatsu to eiyō,” 62.

\textsuperscript{37} Regarding the food condition in colonial Korea and in the Japanese metropole, see Yi, Ilche ha chŏn'si nongŏp chŏngch’ae kwa nongch’on kyŏngje and Bruce F. Johnston with Mosaburo Hosoda and Yoshio Kusumi, Japanese Food Management in World War II (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953).


GGK mobilized nutrition experts with state funds and other administrative assistance. One example is the Committee for Investigation of Economic and Nutritious Meals (Kyŏnge yŏngyang chosa wiwŏnhoe). In June 1940, the GGK’s Department of Hygiene organized the committee to provide standardized menus for various groups of Koreans such as factory workers, children, and students. As the title of the committee indicates, the body considered economy and nutrition as the twin pillars of providing wartime meals for the colonial population. To this end, the committee consulted a wide range of authorities from state to non-state organizations, including Satō Kozō, the president of Keijō Medical College, Kitanzono (北園), major general of the Colonial Korean Army, Song Kŭmsŏn, home economist at Ehwa Women’s College, and Tsuda Setsuko from the Green Flag League (Rokki renmei), an organization for the settler Japanese community.40

Among the scholars affiliated with the committee were Hirokawa Kosaburō, the chief of biochemistry lab at Keijō Medical College and Takai Toshio, a professor of pediatrics at Keijō Imperial University, who conducted studies for the committee such as the diet condition of orphans and the diet of primary school children in Korea.41 The methodologies of these two most prolific experts on Korean diets during the wartime were different from each other. Takai mainly undertook statistical surveys covering the broader population while Hirokawa conducted chemical analysis of sampled diets in the laboratory. Despite their differences, neither would have been able to conduct their scientific research without the support of the state. Various state apparatuses supported their research. When Takai conducted a statistical survey of Korean diets, the Bureau of Education of the GGK and the Department of Education of each province sent

40 “Kakkye kwŏnwi úi yŏn’gu kyŏljŏng p’yojun menyu su wansŏng” [The Crystal of Research by Authorities in Various Disciplines, Standard Menu Completed], Maeil sinbo June 27, 1940, “Isangjŏk sikt’akp’yo” [Ideal Menu], Maeil sinbo July 11, 1940, and “Chŏnsi ha úi yŏngyangsik” [Nutritional Diet under War], Tonga ilbo July 13, 1940.
41 “Kakkye kwŏnwi úi yŏn’gu kyŏljŏng p’yojun menyu su wansŏng,” Maeil sinbo June 27, 1940.
survey sheets to public elementary schools in the Korean peninsula.\textsuperscript{42} Another state apparatus, Bureau of Agricultural Sciences (Nōgyō shikenjō) provided materials for Hirokawa’s research on the nutritional values of embryo rice.\textsuperscript{43} The army was also involved. Hirokawa’s research on varying nutritional values of rice according to the degree of milling was assisted by Nishihara Mitsugi (西原貢), a major general in the Colonial Korean Army and the head of the Korean branch of the Friends of Food Association (Ryōyūkai; 糧友會), a semi-state institution on food management.\textsuperscript{44} Nishihara also accommodated Takai to publish his finding on Korean children as a book in 1940.\textsuperscript{45} In short, wartime nutrition studies were the cooperative product of all these state apparatuses.

Takai was clearly aware of the political meaning of his research. He described the current situation as a time when “the sky and the earth of the Korean peninsula became more and more responsible for providing material and human resources.”\textsuperscript{46} For this supporter of the state, scientific research was a political project for state mobilization. But the political character of nutritional science moved beyond the direct connection between each scientist and the state. Rather, even without any close cooperation, any independent activities of nutrition experts created scientific data on colonial diets that could be used for state food management.

\textsuperscript{42} Takai Toshio, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu” [Nutritional Scientific Observation of the Korean Diet], Jōdai shônika zasshi [The Journal of Pediatrics at the Imperial University of Keijō] 11, no. 5 (March 1940), 14.
\textsuperscript{43} Hirokawa Kosaburō, “Kome haiga no eijo teki igi” [The Nutritional Significance of Rice Germ], Keijō igaku senmon gakkō kiyō 11 no. 8 (Aug 1941): 283-295.
\textsuperscript{44} Hirokawa Kosaburō, “Konsha hakumai, musha hakumai, musha shichibuzukimai oyobi haigamai no vitamin B1 to haiga zanzonryō no kankō” [The Relationship between Vitamin B1 and Remaining Amounts of Germ of White Rice with Sand, White Rice without Sand, 70 Percent Milled White Rice without Sand], Keijō igaku senmon gakkō kiyō 10 no. 10 (Oct 1940): 323-341.
\textsuperscript{45} Takai Toshio, Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu [Nutritional Scientific Observation of the Korean Diet] (Keijō: Chōsen ryōyukai honbu, 1940), 1.
\textsuperscript{46} Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 85.
Nakatani Chūji’s 1942 statistical survey published in the official magazine of the colonial state, *The GGK Monthly Survey*, offers one example of how varied data produced by nutritional scientists helped policy makers in agriculture observe the health of the Korean population. As a GGK officer in agriculture, he insisted that food policy should stand on the ground of nutritional science. He stated, “the food problem should be comprehensively considered in both aspects of quantity and quality [nutritional value of food].”\(^{47}\) Criticizing peacetime food policy for its exclusive focus on quantity, Nakatani urged “a great transformation from peacetime food policy to wartime food policy” from what he believed was “haphazard handling” to “comprehensive” management.\(^{48}\) The direct aim of his paper was to ascertain the current dietary status both in terms of quantity and quality. From the beginning of its rule, the colonial state endeavored to produce abundant statistics on Korea from population and land, to products and trades.\(^{49}\) With these new types of statistics, Nakatani was able to collect data on the colonial population and foodstuffs. Takai’s 1940 survey supplemented the existing data by providing more detailed information about Koreans that had been inaccessible and invisible to date. Takai’s work was impressive in scope covering almost every corner of the peninsula through the network of 3,000 elementary schools in 13 provinces to investigate Korean diet “in a broad and comprehensive manner.”\(^{50}\) By processing the answer sheets collected from 2,475.

\(^{47}\) Nakatani Chūji, “Chōsen no jūminshoku ni kansuru jakkan no kōsatsu: tōkei o kiso to shite no suisan jō” [A Few Thoughts on Korean Diet: Estimation Based on Statistics 1], *Chōsen sōtokufu chōsa geppō* 13, no. 10, 2. Hereafter, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 1.”

\(^{48}\) Nakatani Chūji, “Chōsen no jūminshoku ni kansuru jakkan no kōsatsu: tōkei o kiso to shite no suisan ka” [A Few Thoughts on Korean Diet: Estimation Based on Statistics 2], *Chōsen sōtokufu chōsa geppō* 13, no. 11, 21. Hereafter, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 2.”


\(^{50}\) Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 14.
schools, he provided statistical data about Korean grain consumption patterns.\(^{51}\) These data were cited over the course of three pages of Nakatani’s work for his investigation of Korean grain consumption patterns.\(^{52}\) In a similar manner, Hirokawa’s 1940 and 1941 chemical analyses on the diets of various Korean groups provided detailed data for Nakatani to assess the composition of nutrients in Korean diets.\(^{53}\)

In the preface of his study, Takai evaluated his research as “a food map of the Korean people.”\(^{54}\) Not only Takai’s study but also all the new data of wartime nutrition studies drew a kind of legible map about the colonial diet, a map that confirmed the nutritional problem of Korean diets with scientific data and state-of-art knowledge. To be sure, the map was made not only for the state. The map could be used by many agencies for different reasons. Yet, during the wartime, the state was the one that intervened in the daily food consumption of the Korean population through this type of cartography.

Racial Discourses of Colonial Diets

Not only the context of nutritional knowledge production but also the content of nutrition studies needs to be critically analyzed. Wartime nutrition studies worked as a racial discourse articulating Korean differences vis-à-vis the Japanese. Takai’s 1940 survey attested to this point. He began his paper with his declaration about Korean distinctiveness in diet, stating, “It is commonsensical that Koreans, the majority of residents in Korea, have unique dietary patterns in

\(^{51}\) 13.09 percent Koreans ate only rice for their staples; 59.42 percent ate rice and barely supplemented with other grains; 19.52 percent did not eat any rice but relied on other staples including barely, millet, bean, and potato; the final group of people, 7.98 percent, ate no rice and barely and consumed other miscellaneous grains. Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 36.

\(^{52}\) Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 1,” 14-17.

\(^{53}\) Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 2,”19-20.

\(^{54}\) Takai, Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu, 3.
It is noteworthy that Takai considered grain consumption as the most significant signifier to differentiate the colonial diet from the Japanese counterpart. Takai wrote, “When the diet of Koreans is compared with that of Japanese, the overall remarkable feature is that they do not stick to rice, unlike Japanese, and that instead they flexibly eat barleys, beans, sorghum, millet, and corns.” Interestingly, Takai read the low consumption of rice not as a sign of backwardness but as a nutritional advantage for Koreans, again, in comparison with Japanese. He stated, “As for staples, the residents in the peninsula eat any grains flexibly (jiyūni) without sticking to rice. In comparison with Japanese who feel fear (kiku; 危懼) according to good or bad harvests, Koreans are really free. On the other hand, it is notable from the perspective of nutritional science that many people mix rice with abundant beans that are superior in terms of proteins and vitamins.” In Takai’s view as a nutrition expert, it was dangerous to rely on only one grain as a staple food, in particular, polished rice. Accordingly, he expressed a deep concern about the recent trend of eating more rice even in mountain areas with “a misconception about eating white rice as the equivalence to cultural living.”

Takai’s praise for flexible grain consumptions needs to be analyzed in relation to the wartime food situation. As the rice consumption in Korea increased throughout the 1930s while production decreased during the wartime due to droughts and lack of materials, the Japanese empire had to secure ever larger supplies of rice for its population. To mitigate this trend, the state and semi-state organizations launched campaigns urging people to eat less-polished rice and

57 Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 86.
58 Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 86.
more miscellaneous grains instead of polished rice. Beyond the campaign, the state expanded its control measures step by step. From November 1939, in the wake of an historical drought, any sales of polished rice without permission were prohibited by law. From December of the same year, prohibition intensified with a ban on any millings of rice more than 70 percent (ch’lbundomi) both in Korea and in Japan. Going a step further, the state dissolved preexisting market institutions and one by one merged them into unified state or state-supported organizations. Systematic rationing began in May 1940 and expanded its coverage from rice to other grains, salt, meat, fish, vegetables and fruits. The state efforts for food control culminated in the establishment of Korean Foodstuffs Company (Chosŏn singnyang yŏngdan) in April 1943 as the chief organization to merge all the preexisting institutions regarding collection, storage, distribution, and rationing.

Given the connection between Takai and the state, it may be probable that he criticized the increasing rice consumption in order to buttress the state policy for rice conservation. Yet, the relationship between wartime nutritional scientists and the state was deeper than such a direct political support of the state to experts and vice-versa. By the 1930s, nutritional research in the global scale verified the association of specific vitamins and minerals with diseases such as beriberi, scurvy, anemia, and rickets. The effect was dramatic. Although meals looked abundant in terms of quantity, if vitamins or minerals were lacking, the meals were categorized as malnutritious. As people became aware that even a miniscule amount of vitamins could drastically affect health, the meaning of hunger expanded from physical scarcity of food and famine into the concept of malnutrition, a state of deficit in nutrition. The fear of malnutrition of vitamins and minerals swept around the globe in the 1930s, and the fear was followed by debates

59 For the so-called saving-rice campaign, see Yi, Ilche ha chŏnsi nongŏp chŏngch’ae kwa nongch’on kyŏngje.  
60 For more detailed history of the development of state-run food institutions and laws, see the footnote 39.
on how to determine the minimum amount of required vitamins and how to meet it.\textsuperscript{61} For instance, in his 1936 book, John Boyd Orr, an eminent nutrition scientist who became the first chief of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in 1945, surprised the British people for his claim that 50 percent of the population was malnourished in terms of minerals and vitamins.\textsuperscript{62} As for grain consumption, the correlation between beriberi and vitamin B deficit in polished rice already acquired undeniable scientific authority in and out of the Japanese empire in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{63} Once social players accepted nutritional harm of eating white rice as a scientific truth, they would reach the same conclusion regarding Takai’s concern about increasing consumption of rice in Korea.

To be sure, nutrition experts on rice and beriberi were not united. As Alexander Bay examines in his study about the so-called haigamai debate, Japanese experts in the 20s and 30s fiercely debated which type of rice, germ rice (haigamai) or 70 percent milled rice (shichibu tzukimai) was the most desirable milled rice in consideration of various factors from vitamin B intake, digestion rate, and milling technology. In terms of science, haigamai earned more support thanks to higher nutritional value and easy digestion. Yet, in terms of technology and economy, haigamai had weaknesses because milling the rice required new machinery for millers and because certain types of rice could not hold the germ after the milling process for haigamai. As a result, the 1939 milling regulation law chose 70 percent milled rice over haigamai.\textsuperscript{64} Beyond the boundary of the empire, there was no unified opinion about how much vitamin B was exactly

\textsuperscript{61} For instance, see Arnold, “The ‘Discovery’ of Malnutrition and Diet in Colonial India,” and Chapter of Vernon, Hunger, and Chapter 5 of Mosby, Food will Win the War.
\textsuperscript{64} Chapter 6 of Bay, Beriberi in Modern Japan.
needed for health. Despite all the disunity, almost all the social players in and out of Japan agreed that polished rice was harmful to health. And the agreement shaped the wartime rice regulation policy aimed at both Korean health and rice conservation.

Takai’s appreciation of Koreans flexible grain consumption also needs to be contextualized in the empire’s attempt to maximize food resources by incorporating colonial diets as a subcategory of the Japanese national diet. In his research on wartime food consumption in Japan, historian Eric C. Rath examines how the concept of “local foods” (hyangt’osik; kyōrishoku in Japanese) gained popularity in the 1940s for appropriate national cuisines. When he discussed the term “local,” Rath focuses on how rural diets, which had been associated with coarse, simple, and inferior meals in terms of social status, gained new meaning as desirable national cuisines over luxurious cosmopolitan urban cuisines for their advantages in nutrition, affordability, and self-sufficiency. Since Rath’s scope is limited to the Japanese archipelagoes, he does not turn his attention to the biggest colony. Yet, Korean ethnic cuisines, too, emerged as valuable part of local foods that would contribute to mitigating wartime food shortages—at least as far as they possessed nutritional benefits. In colonial Korea, the term, local food, was not used as much as in the metropole. In his 1944 book, titled Introduction to Korean Foodstuffs, Kim Hojik at Sungmyŏng Women’s College proposed methodologies of studying Korean local foods in awareness of Korean diets for valuable food resources in the time of war. Regardless of the use of the term, local food, many wartime nutrition studies analyzed nutritional values of Korean

67 Yutakayama Taichi [Kim Hojik], Chōsen shokumotsu gairon [Introduction to Korean Foodstuffs] (Keijō: Seikatsu kagakusha, 1944). For the discussion of local foods in the 20th century Korea, see Chu Yŏngha, Ŭmsik inmunhak: ŭmsik ŭro pon han’guk úi yŏksa wa munhw [Food Humanities: Korean History and Culture through the Lens of Food] (Seoul: Humanist, 2011), 289-298.
foods such as pollack and wild plants in expectation of their potential as food resources. In 1941, Takai himself analyzed the amount of vitamin C in thirty-three wild plants with the awareness that eating wild plants was “a unique dietary habit of Koreans” with nutritional benefits. He also praised two representative ethnic Korean side dishes, soy bean soup and kimchi, respectively, as “a treasured source of plant protein” and “a tactful method to preserve vitamin C of vegetables for the winter time.” All these evaluations elevated Korean local diets as appropriate wartime cuisines full of nutritional values.

To be sure, valuation of the nutritional benefits in Korean diets did not mean complete embrace of Korean difference in diet. Throughout the colonial period, the peculiarity of the Korean diet such as garlic had been readily associated with, at best, exoticism and, at worse, disgust and contempt in public media like tourist guidebooks, newspapers, and magazines. Highly specialized wartime nutrition studies seldom resorted to any blatant racism. Rather, they presented their research as an “objective” approach to Korean diets through scientific methodologies. Despite the rhetoric about scientific knowledge, however, the studies created a “scientific” discourse of Korean inferiority and backwardness by locating quantified data about

70 Takai Toshio et al., “Chōsen ni okeru zassō namini jumokuha chū no bitamin C gan'yūryō ni tsuite” Jōdai shōnika zasshi [On the Vitamin C in Weeds and Tree Leaves in Korea], Jōdai shōnika zasshi 11 no. 8 (May 1941), 1.
71 Takai Toshio & Pae Yŏngsŏl, “Chōsen ni okeru toshi nami ni nōson gakudō no eiyōgakuteki kansatsu dai ichi hen: Chōsen ni okeru toshi nami ni nōson Manabu gakudō no shushoku, fukushoku, kanshoku ni tsuite” [Nutrition Observation of Urban and Rural Children in Korea, the First Section: On the Main Dishes, Side Dishes, and Snacks of Urban and Rural Children in Korea], Jōdai shōnika zasshi 11 no. 5 (Mar 1940), 108.
72 Takai, “Chōsen ni okeru zassō namini jumokuha chū no bitamin C gan'yūryō ni tsuite,” 6.
Korean diets in the evolutionary lines of nutritional progress occupied by other advanced nations in the world including the Japanese. In doing so, nutrition studies justified intervention in Korean diets as a kind of civilizing mission to improve the colonial population.\textsuperscript{74}

Nakatani Chūji’s statistical survey exemplifies how nutrition studies articulated the Korean diet as a sign of backwardness by comparing Koreans as a single group vis-à-vis the Japanese. His survey was full of a series of comparisons between Korea and Japan in a linear line of nutritional progress. For instance, he calculated that average food consumption of Koreans per a day, 735.4 grams to 943.5 grams in the years between 1933 and 1939 were “50 to 60 percent of the Japanese average at 1,516.23 grams.”\textsuperscript{75} Similarly, he calculated that the caloric intake of Koreans, 2,212 calories a day\textsuperscript{76} was 30 percent lower than the daily total consumption of Japanese, about 3,000 calories.\textsuperscript{77} As for protein intake, Nakatani pointed out 60 to 70 grams of protein consumption of Koreans remained 90 percent of Japanese.\textsuperscript{78} After offering these signs of differences in a neutral tone, he summarized his view on the differences in the following terms:

When the diet of Koreans is compared with Japan, we cannot help but perceive a considerable \textit{inferiority}. Of course, because of variances derived from estimation techniques, we should be careful to make a hasty conclusion, but because of the \textit{inferiority}, the diet of Koreans includes many \textit{anomalies} \textit{[hakösei; p’ahaengsŏng in Korean]}.\textsuperscript{79}

Nakatani’s problematic usage of the terms like inferiority and anomaly was so strong that a rival cannot be found in other nutrition studies, yet his approach to define Korean diets as a problem filled with deficits characterized almost all wartime nutrition studies.

\textsuperscript{74} For more examples of nutrition science as a racial discourse, see Chapter Vernon, \textit{Hunger}, 104-116, 146-158 and Chapter 2 of Weinreb, \textit{Modern Hungers}.
\textsuperscript{75} Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 2,” 4.
\textsuperscript{76} Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 1,” 10.
\textsuperscript{77} Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 1,” 13.
\textsuperscript{78} Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 2,” 11.
\textsuperscript{79} Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 2,” 20.
Although nutrition studies often compared Koreans as a single group with Japanese, it does not mean that wartime researchers overlooked differences inside Korea. Rather, the unevenness inside the peninsula according to class, region, age, and gender was captured in wartime nutrition studies as yet another manifestation of nutritional problem in Korean diets. Among the unevenness, rural nutritional poverty was encapsulated in the studies as the most conspicuous problem in the colonial diet. The attention to the nutritional poverty in the countryside per se is not surprising. As the majority of the Korean population (about 70 to 80 percent), their general poverty and their poor diet in particular, symbolized with terms like spring famine, had always been a keen social issue throughout the colonial period. Beyond the boundary of the Korean peninsula, rural poverty and hunger aroused global concerns in the 1930s in the wake of the Great Depression and rural devastations. The League of Nations Health Organization held conferences on rural hygiene, first in Geneva in 1931 for the European countryside, followed by meetings on African (Johannesburg in 1935) and Asian countries (Bandung in 1937). For the Bandung conference, the Japanese empire also dispatched its experts and officers like Saeki Tadasu, the director of the National Institute of Nutrition Research (kokuritsu eiyō kenkyūjo, established in 1919, which later merged into the Institute of Health and Welfare Science in 1940). A Korean doctor, Yi Yŏngch’un participated in the conference as an observer to write a report in a public magazine.

81 Yi Yŏngch’un, “Tongyang nongch’on wisaeng kukche hoeŭi” [Far Eastern Rural Hygiene Conference], Chogawang 7 no. 11 (Nov. 1937): 104-110. For more details about Yi, see Pak Yunjae, “1940-60nyŏndae nongch’on wisaeng yŏn’guo ŭi sŏllip kwa hwaldong” [The Establishment of the Institute for Rural Hygiene and its Activities in the 1940-60s], Yŏksa wa hyŏnsil 72 (June 2009): 253-287.
A rather surprising finding about the rural diet was not their absolute poverty but their
dearth of animal protein. In general, wartime nutrition experts did not show any serious concerns
about calorie intakes of Koreans including the rural population. But when they turned their
attention to animal protein, a nutrient considered the most essential nutrient for the development
of children and the muscle power of laborers, experts reported protein deficiency as a major
dietary problem of (rural) Koreans. For instance, Hirokawa Kosaburō’s biochemical analysis of
typical meals of mountain village residents reported that less than 10 percent of protein in their
diet was insufficient for growth and development. Especially Takai accentuated his
confirmation of rural animal protein deficits in his comparison of the city and the countryside.
He reported that over 30 percent of people in Korea, mainly living in the countryside and
mountain areas, relied only on vegetables and soybean pastes for their protein intake without
eating any animal protein while 22 percent urban residents absorbed protein from a variety of
sources. Rural children’ diet concerned this specialist in pediatrics, again in comparison with
the urban counterpart. In his research based on the diet of the students of four primary schools,
Takai, in cooperation with a Korean researcher, Pae Yōngsŏl, reported that while students in the
city ate a variety of side dishes including beef, pork, chicken, fish, egg, and milk, the table of the
countryside students was monopolized simply by soy bean soup and kimchi. Although Takai and
Pae praised the protein value of soy bean soup, they confirmed that “the amount of animal
protein intake by school children in the countryside was severely insufficient” to “satisfy the
demand of school children in the most vigorous growth and development.”

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82 Hirokawa Kosaburō, “Chōsen ni okeru sankan chihō jūminshoku no eiyōgaku teki kenkyū” [Nutrition Research
on the Diet of Mountain Village People in Korea], Keijō igaku senmon gakkō kiyō 10, no. 6 (June 1940): 209-217.
83 Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 86.
84 Takai & Pae, “Chōsen ni okeru toshi nami ni nōson gakudō no eiyōgakuteki kansatsu dai ichi hen.”
85 Takai & Pae, “Chōsen ni okeru toshi nami ni nōson gakudō no eiyōgakuteki kansatsu dai ichi hen,” 101.
To some degree, all the findings about Korean’s meager intake of animal protein, in particular, of the rural population were commonsensical in the colonial period, but the point is that the wartime studies confirmed the commonsensical nutritional poverty as a scientifically proven problem in need of social intervention for improvement. More often than not, wartime researchers expressed their will to improve Korean diets with their elitist, nationalist, or colonialist sympathy for the population. In an interview, Hirokawa expressed his determination to “keep the low-class people in mind” when conducting research on the consumption of roots and barks by people in mountain areas. Takai Toshio set the meaning of his research as “to reform and guide the dietary patterns [of Koreans] on the ground of nutritional science.” For him, his research was part of fraternal love for “improving the body of 23 million brethren (tŏhŏ) in the Korean peninsula.”

In sharing the same modernist vision for efficient food consumption, such desires of Japanese experts were not dissimilar to Korean nationalist desire to reform and improve Korean diets. Kim Hojik is a good example. As one of the pioneers in nutritional science in Korea, who later received a PhD from Cornell University in 1951 for his research on soybeans, Kim bewailed, “From the past, Koreans have been extremely ignorant and indifferent to foodstuffs.” The ignorance and indifference, he believed, produced Korean diets filled with “deficiencies” (kyŏrham), such as heavy reliance on grains, overuse of seasoning, and unnecessary and innutritious side dishes. For Kim, educating Koreans was a crucial task for improving their diet into a modern one and eventually improving the Korean nation. “Without breaking the notion [ignorance of foods],” Kim claimed, “it would be a long road to improvement (hyangsang ŭi

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86 “Hach’ŭng sahoe ŭi yŏngyang e ch’ijung” [Stress on the Nutrition of the Lower Society], Tonga ilbo June 28, 1940.
87 Takai, “Chŏsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 85.
For the Korean elite reformist, who altered his name to Yutakayama Taichi and later served in the Syngman Rhee regime in postcolonial South Korea as a vice-minister of education, his aspiration to improve Korean diets with a modernist vision worked in the same direction with Japanese experts like Takai. The aforementioned joint project of Korean and Japanese students on the urban poor also attests to the shared desire of elites across the ethnic boundary to improve Koreans through social intervention. With a belief that “the principle of government is to make people vital,” the students on the urban poor hoped that “appropriate facilities” for “sound development” should be provided for Korea.

Such governmental ambitions to improve Koreans were not always identical with the state’s will to improve Koreans for the war effort. In many cases, however, these two aims were difficult to differentiate. Especially, when the researchers accepted the state as the most efficient means to fix the problem of Korean diet, the boundary between the state and researchers readily disappeared. This issue will be examined in the next section.

Improving the Korean Diet through the State: School Lunch Program

In the first half of the 20th century, nutrition scientists and policy makers around the world debated the leading cause of malnutrition as a step to fix the problem. To simplify, there were two divided camps between those who stressed structural issues such as lack of economic income and those who privileged ignorance of individuals and ethnic groups—although these

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89 Kim Hojik, “Chosŏn ŭmsik ŭi yŏngyangga” [Nutritional Value of Korean Food], Chogwang 5, no. 11 (Nov. 1940), 103.
90 Keijō teikoku daigaku eisei chōsabu eds., Domakumin no seikatsu eisei, 1.
two approaches were not exclusive binaries. There was no fierce debate on the cause of Korean nutritional deficits, but wartime nutrition studies revealed different views of the cause of Korean nutritional problems. On the one side, intellectuals like the aforementioned Kim Hojik stressed Koreans, individuals and collective alike, as ignorant subjects guilty of inefficient food consumption. On the other side, many researchers considered class and economy as a dominant factor. For example, Hirokawa’s 1941 serialized research on upper-class, middle-class, and lower-class meals consolidated the relationship between income and health. His research reported that upper-class and middle-class diets did not have any serious nutrition problems to the degree that he worried about protein overconsumption while his research shows that the lower-class diets had nutrition deficits in minerals and protein.

Takai was ambivalent. On the one hand, he considered socioeconomic factors, stating that “diet improvement cannot be said to be separate from the economy.” He observed that “economic improvement in recent years” enabled 22 percent of Koreans to consume more animal protein like eggs, fish, and meat. Similarly, he also observed rural households who sold their chicken eggs for money instead of feeding their children for protein intake. Except for sporadic mentions, however, Takai’s survey focused primarily on natural conditions as the main cause of malnutrition over socioeconomic conditions, in doing so, he revealed a colonist interpretation of Korean diets as a natural object in need of scientific, technological, and colonial

91 For instance, see Chapter 5 of Mosby, Food Will Win the War.
93 Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 87.
94 Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 86.
intervention. In the beginning of his 1940 survey, he explained that each nation possessed peculiar dietary patterns through history due to “the land’s climate (fūdo), local products, and geographical circumstances.”  

He mentioned history, but his concept of history meant a kind of natural history determined by geographical variances that he divided into six categories, seashore, plain, basin, forest, plateau, and high mountain. To him, it was natural that people in plains ate more rice while people in mountains consumed other grains. As for animal protein, he observed, people in the seaside village utilized seafoods for animal protein sources by adding seafoods to kimchi while mountain village people were not afforded the option. To him, animal deficits in Korean diets resulted from this geographical difference. Even when Takai took the economy into account, his framework did not include socioeconomic changes under Japanese rule, such as the state-led agricultural development plans for rice production which forced Korean farmers sell their rice to the metropolitan market for cash while eating grains like millets and beans imported from Manchuria. As for animal protein, he did not mention that Korean beef—as much as 10 to 30 thousand heads a year—fed Japanese troops during the war. There was no room for analyzing the colonial nature of the economy in his account.

To this scientist interpreting Korean diets as a natural product, science offered a systematic tool to interpret the pros and cons of the diets as consequences of the natural environments and, then, to fix the weaknesses through technical solutions. Takai’s solution to animal protein deficit was to overcome the geographic unevenness through shipment of animal protein food sources from one place in high production to another place in low production. More

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95 Takai, “Chōsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu,” 13.
96 See Yi, Ilche ha chōnsi nongŏp chŏngch’ae kwa nongch’on kyŏngje, 79-80.
specifically, he proposed supplying sardines that he believed existed “limitless in the treasure sea of the Korean peninsula” to children in landlocked rural areas.98

Takai’s discussion of sardines as a limitless food resource offers an opportunity to pay attention to aquaculture products of Korea, a less-researched topic in comparison with well-researched agricultural products including rice. The Japanese empire was a maritime empire, and seas surrounding the Korean peninsula on three sides provided abundant sea products for the empire. Among the products, sardines caught in the East Sea had the number one status in the 1930s. As for 1937, 1.38 million tons of sardines accounted for 65 percent of Korean fishery production, followed by pollack (0.15 million tons), mackerel (0.07 million), and croaker (0.05 million).99 This stunning production in Korea was impressive even on the global scale to a degree that Korean sardines contributed to the half of the total sardine production in the world.100

It is noteworthy that, in contrast to other three fishes, almost all sardines in Korea up to 90 percent were used not for food consumption but for the oil ingredient of industrial products like candles, cosmetics, and gunpowder.101 In the 1930s, sardine oil processing industry enjoyed prosperity in the east coast cities in northern Korea like Ch’ŏngjin that emerged as an industrial

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99 Chōsen sōtokufu ed., Chōsen sōtokufu tōkei nenpō [The Statistics Yearbook of the Government General of Korea] (Keijō: Chōsen sōtokufu: 1937), 104-108. Compared to the other above-mentioned three seafoods, which had longer histories in Korean diets, sardine’s escalation to the number one fish was of recent origin. Since the mid-1920s, the annual catches of the fish had increased dramatically by more than three times, from 75 thousand tons on-average in the years between 1915 and 1925 to 241 thousand tons annually between 1927 and 1937. This impressive amount of sardine production has been believed by contemporaries and 21st century-scholars to result from unexpected environmental change of sardine number increase in the East Sea and man-made development of new fishing technology. See Sim Chaeuk and Ha Wŏnho, “Ilche kangjŏmgi Tonghæi ŏjok chawŏn ŭi sut’al kwa hwaryŏng” [Exploitation and Utilization of Fishery Resources in the Colonial Period], Sungsil sahak 38 (June 2017), 241.

100 According to an article in 1939, Korean sardines, about 1.4 million tons a year, contributed to the half of the total sardine production in the world, followed by 0.6 million tons of Japan and 0.2 million of the USA. Chŏng Mun’gi, “Chosŏn chungyo susanmul 3” [Major Sea Products in Korea 3], Tonga ilbo Apr. 25, 1939. Chŏng studied fishery at Tokyo Imperial University. After graduation in 1929, Chŏng developed his career as an expert in aquaculture including his position at the Office of Fishery Sciences of the GGK. After liberation, he became an important figure in fishery of postcolonial South Korea.

101 Sim and Ha, “Ilche kangjŏmgi Tonghæi ŏjok chawŏn ŭi sut’al kwa hwaryŏng.”
port city for sardine processing. It is also noteworthy that sardine residue after oil extraction was utilized as the second largest commercial fertilizers next to chemical fertilizers produced in another industrial port city in northern Korea, Hŭngnam. In contrast to such versatile industrial usage, the fish did not acquire fame as a delicious food, if not edible.

Throughout the 1930s and 40s, in particular, in lieu of utilizing every possible food resource in the wartime, the colonial state and companies endeavored to increase sardines’ utilities for food. For instance, the state encouraged using sardine powder to make bread called Prosperous Asia Bread (Hŭngappang). But more importantly, sardines were canned, targeting not only Korean consumers but also global consumers. In this context, Takai expected sardines to be a valuable animal protein source to supplement the nutritional deficit of Korean diets. However, his expectation did not come to full fruition as sardine production dramatically dwindled in the 1940s to 70 thousand in 1942 and almost zero in 1943, mainly because of unexpected sardine number decrease in the East Sea and partly because of ship and fuel shortage during the wartime. This gloomy future, however, could not have been anticipated when Takai wrote in 1939 about the “unlimited” potentials of sardines for food.

Another expectation of Takai that was unrealized was his hopes for the state to serve as the organizational entity to fix the natural unevenness. When he proposed sardine shipment from seashore villages to mountain areas, he did not believe that liberal market economy could enable

103 For instance, in 1939, 641 tons of chemical fertilizers were produced in Korea followed by 235 tons of animal-based fertilizers and 103 tons of plant-based fertilizers. Chŏsen sŏtokuﬁ nŏrinkyoku, Chŏsen no hiryŏ [Fertilizers in Korea] (Keijō: Chŏsen Sŏtokuﬁ, 1941), 43-44.
104 “Hŭngappang chejobŏp” [Recipe for Hŭngappang], Maeil sinbo Nov. 30, 1940.
105 For instance, see Chŏng, “Chosŏn chungyo susannul 3.” “Yŏngyang singnyang ūro chŏnggŏi ka hannok” [Sardines Contribute as a Nutritious Food], Maeil sinbo Dec. 16, 1941. According to the 1937 GGK official statistics, 10 percent of processed seafoods were canned.
106 Sim and Ha, “Ilche kangiǒngi Tonghae ŏjok chawŏn ū sut’al kwa hwaryong,” 252.
the flow from one place to another—although he did not explicitly use the term “liberal market.”

The price of sardines was not cheap in the city, Takai lamented, while many were discarded rotten at the seaside. Against this malfunction of the market, Takai called for a “powerful control” to set aside sardines for the people in the countryside and mountain areas before being used for industrial purposes. He did not explicitly mention who would be the agent of the powerful control, but he implied that the only possibility was the state. For Takai, state control was a measure to address the unevenness caused by nature and the market.

Beyond the state control of the market, Takai expected state-sponsored lunch programs as the best way “to provide nutritious meals at the lowest price” through “orders in mass quantity.” Apart from providing meals at cheap costs, Takai believed, schools could play many roles in improving Korean children’s diet and health. First, he urged schools to produce self-sufficient foods for the students by using their land for cultivating plants and rabbits, another animal protein source recommended by Takai. He also expected school lunch programs to help correct poor dietary patterns of individual children through education, claiming that school lunch programs would be “the most efficient way of disseminating healthy nutrition knowledge in Korea.” Beyond nutrition education, Takai insisted on other educational benefits, from academic achievement and collective lifestyle, to appreciation of land and labor. For the expert who praised their multiple benefits, schools in Korea, almost exclusively run by the state in the colonial period, were not a brutal apparatus of the state but a beneficial modern institute to reshape children’s diets into a healthy and cost-efficient one.

108 Takai, “Jikyokuka no shōni eiyō ni tsuite,” 60.
109 Takai Toshio, “Gakkō kyūshoku no riron to jissai 1” [The Theory and Practice of School Lunch Program], Chōsen no kyōiku kenkyū [Research on Korean Education] 29 no. 142 (May 1940), 30.
110 Takai, “Jikyokuka no shōni eiyō ni tsuite,” 60.
111 Takai, “Gakkō kyūshoku no riron to jissai 1,” 30.
112 Takai, “Gakkō kyūshoku no riron to jissai 1,” 29-30.
Takai’s expectation of the state as an efficient food distributor beyond the liberal market economy was not exceptional in and out of the Japanese empire. Nakatani believed Korean inferiority in diet was being gradually corrected thanks to urbanization and economic development.\(^\text{113}\) Nakatani insisted, however, the inferiority should be overcome at a faster pace through food policy that he believed as a crucial part of “national planning” (kokudo keikaku).\(^\text{114}\) Historians like James Vernon examine expanding measures of state intervention in daily food consumption in the 20th century, ranging from rationing and school meals to factory canteens.\(^\text{115}\) Takai was aware of the global trend of expanding state intervention in everyday food consumption. In his article, he examined a brief history of state-involved school lunch program developments in other countries like Germany, Britain, France, and metropolitan Japan as a historical progress for physical improvement and social relief. Especially, when he mentioned the first state-subsidized school lunch program in Japan proper in 1932, he called the program as a “pioneering event” in which “the revenue of the state” was invested “in a large scale” for “the serious deficit in meals of rural children in the wake of the worldwide depression.”\(^\text{116}\) Casting his eyes on Korea, Takai called for the necessity of state-run school lunch programs in the peninsula as the best way of improving Korean health.

Wartime history witnessed the partial realization of Takai’s dream in Korea. In April 1939, a school lunch program began in a primary school affiliated to Seoul Normal School, one of the most prestigious schools in Korea. As Takai recollected his own participation in the program, he consolidated his belief that “school lunch program is the only way to improve

\(^{113}\) Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 2,” 11.

\(^{114}\) Nakatani, “Thoughts on Korean Diet 1,” 2.

\(^{115}\) Vernon, Hunger and Weinreb, Modern Hungers.

\(^{116}\) Takai, “Gakkō kyūshoku no riron to jissai 1,” 30. For more details on school lunch programs in early 20th century Japan, see Shinobu Kojima, Gakkō kyūshoku hensenshi [The History of School Lunch Programs] (Okayama: Daigaku Kyōiku Shuppan, 1993).
children’s physical health.” Takai believed the program to be the first school lunch program in Korea, but he was incorrect. Even prior to the school, subsidized lunches were given to children from poor families by charities and local governments. According to articles in Tonga Daily, for instance, lunches were given to 500 children in 18 schools in Seoul through a fund supported by an individual philanthropist in 1933. But the program ended with the depletion of funds as well as the local government refusing to secure a budget claiming that free lunch would foster a “propensity for dependency.” As we can see from this case, lunch programs existed only as a sporadic and unstable social relief targeting deprived children. During the wartime, school lunch programs expanded their scope in terms of class and regional coverage. From December 1939 to May 1940 in the wake of a drought, lunches were given to the children in the areas affected by the natural disaster through the involvement of the central government as well as local governments. Recalling “the eyes of a child invigorated by a warm lunch,” Takai applauded this temporary relief lunch as “an epoch-making moment in the history of school lunch programs in Korea,” and he called for more efforts to achieve a “permanent” school feeding system. This took much more time than he had hoped. It wasn’t until March 1944 when the metropolitan government decided to provide special rations, 100 grams of rice and 15 grams of miso, for school children in six major cities in the Japanese archipelago. In a simultaneous step, the colonial state also decided to provide lunch to 290 thousand primary school students in ten major cities in the Japanese archipelago.

117 Takai, “Gakkō kyūshoku no riron to jissai 1,” 30.
119 Chōsen sōtokufu shiseikyoku shakaika eds., Shōwa14 nen kangaishi [The Record of the 1939 Drought] (Keijō: Chōsen sōtokufu shiseikyoku shakaika, 1939), 241.
120 Takai, “Gakkō kyūshoku no riron to jissai 1,” 29.
cities in Korea, implying that Korean children, too, were included to the universal wartime welfare regime.\footnote{122}{“Kamsahal hakkyo küpsik, usŏn 30 man myŏng ŭi chŏmsim put’ŏ” [Thankful School Feeding Begins with 300 Thousand Lunches], Maeil sinbo Mar 19, 1944.}

More research is needed to know whether Takai had any direct ties with the implementation of the first nation-wide school lunch program in Korea. At this moment, linkages can only be speculated based on his 1939 involvement in the school lunch program and his 1940 participation in the Committee for Investigation of Economic and Nutritious Meals. Regardless of Takai’s participation in the 1944 program, however, it is clear from newspaper descriptions that nutrition scientific approach to food was deeply embedded in the lunch program. When 4.27 ounce (7 hop) of bread was allocated for lunch, a newspaper article praised the meaning of the lunch, enumerating the nutritional value of the 543 kcal bread, 13.33 gram protein, 4.73 gram fat, 444.77 gram carbohydrate, 1.59 gram fiber, and 2.26 gram minerals in comparison with the nutritional values of ordinary lunches carried from home, 150 kcal.\footnote{123}{“Kamsahal hakkyo küpsik, usŏn 30 man myŏng ŭi chŏmsim put’ŏ” and “12 man haktong e küpsik, Kyŏngsŏng sŏn 4 il put’ŏ silssi” [School Feeding for 120 Thousand Students From the 4th in Seoul], Maeil sinbo Mar 30, 1944. “Kamsahal hakkyo küpsik, usŏn 30 man myŏng ŭi chŏmsim put’ŏ.” “Pap taesin ppang ŭro tangbun’gan ŭn küpsik” [Bread instead of Rice, Temporarily for School Feeding], Maeil sinbo Oct. 6, 1944.}

Of course, the quality and quantity were still not as impressive as Takai expected. The coverage was limited to cities while the major concern for Takai was rural children. In terms of ingredients, 120 thousand school children in Seoul could eat only one piece of bread and without the type of animal protein sources recommended by Takai. Cooking facilities and utensils were incomplete for the massive number of meals for about thousand children in a school.\footnote{124}{“Kamsahal hakkyo küpsik, usŏn 30 man myŏng ŭi chŏmsim put’ŏ.”} In the case of Hamhŭng, hot meals were promised for the second semester, but were never served.\footnote{125}{“Pap taesin ppang ŭro tangbun’gan ŭn küpsik” [Bread instead of Rice, Temporarily for School Feeding], Maeil sinbo Oct. 6, 1944.} Despite these disappointing results, the point is neither to decide whether this specific policy of
the colonial state was successful nor limited. Rather, the lunch programs expanded during the wartime demonstrate how the modern vision of nutrition experts for nutritious diet at the lowest cost advocated state food management as the most efficient method to provide a healthy diet.

Conclusion

In examining key figures and their works, this chapter has investigated wartime nutrition studies on Korean diets as a colonialist power-knowledge system for managing the colonial diet and population. In close tie with the wartime state, nutrition experts in the Japanese empire produced a wealth of scientific data of Korean diets, the data used by the state to gain knowledge about the current status of the Korean population for wartime management of food and health. As a colonial racial discourse, the scientific data strengthened the colonialist image of Korean diets as inferior fraught with deficiencies such as animal protein shortfalls. By attributing the cause for the inferiority with the natural environments, nutrition experts like Takai Toshio construed the colonial diet as a natural result that could be improved through scientific intervention. For nutrition experts like him, wartime state measures like school lunch programs were not part of wartime state mobilization of Koreans but the most scientific, economic, efficient, and benevolent engagement in nutrition poverty. Eventually, all these political features of the wartime nutrition studies on Korea will contribute to our understanding of the Japanese empire in its last phase in the late 1930s and into the 1940s. The empire was not an aberration from the universal trend of the 20th century global history but as part of the contemporary trend in which the modern vision of improving diet in the most efficient manner translated to state intervention of everyday life through scientific discourses on diet and health. Not unlike other wartime countries, nutrition studies on Korean diets demonstrate how 20th century power operated as a
biopolitical system in which science played a crucial role in managing populations in the name of improving their health.

Chapter 4 will continue to investigate wartime food politics embedded in the discourses and practices of nutritional experts, yet the chapter takes its material for analysis from less specialized and more popular texts like cookbooks and recipe columns. While present chapter has mainly focused on how nutritional experts played a crucial role in measuring Korean diets as a racial/ethnic issue, Chapter 4 will pay special attention to how wartime discourses on everyday food consumption converged with gendered desires to perform ideal female subjects through domestic food consumption.
Chapter 4
“Eating for the Final Battle”: Dietary Advice on the Korean Homefront

On Oct. 30, 1939, in the wake of a historical drought in the southern rice paddy areas of the Korean peninsula, a roundtable discussion about conserving rice was held at Ehwa Women’s College with the participation of renowned scholars on nutrition, health, home management, and education (Figure 4-1). Song Kŭmsŏn, the university’s home economist opened the roundtable with the remark, “Today, when not only our country but also the world is embroiled in turmoil, the biggest and the most crucial issue facing us is food consumption.” She continued, “If so, what should we do? Today we are going to examine how we can conserve rice and make delicious meals with less.” Following Song’s opening remark, participants shared practical tips for economizing not only rice but also almost all food items.

(Figure 4-1)

1 “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 1” [Roundtable Discussion on Rice Conservation 1],  Maeil sinbo Nov. 1, 1939.
This roundtable discussion is one iteration of what I call dietary advice literature that emerged during the wartime, which manifested in a variety of forms, from roundtable discussions and cooking lessons, to cookbooks and recipe columns in newspapers and magazines. Like the highly specialized journal articles examined in the previous chapter, dietary advice, produced by a motley of food experts also positioned itself as scientific and technical, claiming to impart apolitical advice for scientific, efficient, and healthy diet in time of war. For instance, Yi Kapsu, a physiologist at Keijō Imperial University in the roundtable advised people to eat the peel of vegetables and fruits, informing the readers, “Sweet potatoes, potatoes, and apples have excellent vitamins. There is nothing to dispose.” “If we masticate sufficiently,” Yi also noted, “2,000 calories is adequate for a day instead of 3,000 calories.”

As such, Yi and other participants translated vocabularies of expertise on nutrition into practical tips for how to maximize food utility with limited food resources.

Yet, this chapter broaches wartime advice literature on dietary practice as a complex political, social, and cultural discourse in need of a critical investigation. As scholarship on cookbooks in global cases amply demonstrates, cookbooks and other culinary texts were more than just a collection of technical instructions, and instead, should be treated as complex historical documents. Building on such scholarship, this chapter approaches dietary advice in Korea as a political discourse of subject formation that reflects norms, aspirations, and anxieties of the time. Especially, this chapter reads dietary advice as part and parcel of wartime gender

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2 “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 7,” Maeil sinbo Nov. 8, 1939.
ideology, which sought to define female gender norms on the homefront, that is to say, the domestic space.

As previous studies on gender roles in wartime daily life has examined, wartime gender norms in dietary advice reflected conservative and imperialist desires to form normative female subjects who would fulfill their natural and social duty to manage domestic consumption for the sake of war efforts. Yet, many studies have limited their analyses to demonstrating how wartime gender ideology forced housewives to accept norms that were imposed by the disciplinary rhetoric, such as limiting women’s roles in domestic space, cutting down consumption, enduring austerity, and sacrificing individual interests for the public good, to name a few. This chapter approaches dietary advice in a more capacious way, less as a mere suppression of desires, than as a more complex discourse that bear witness to the multiple aspirations of the time which intermingled, confronted, and negotiated with each other. Recent scholarship on Nazi Germany and socialist countries has corrected the flattened image of the 20th century total war regimes as a purely oppressive force by underscoring the dynamic interactions of desires among diverse stakeholders including housewives. In her analysis of Yugoslavian cookbooks, for instance, Wendy Bracewell reads the socialist cookbooks as “the place where public and private fantasies meet and jostle,” rather than approach the books as a window into austerity and control of a socialist state. Similarly, a more sophisticated readings of dietary advice in Korea will enable us

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5 For instance, see the word “enforcement” in the title of Yi, “Ilche mal chŏnsi ch’je ha ‘kungmin saenghwal ŭi kangje wa kŭ silt’ae.”

6 Bracewell, “Eating Up Yugoslavia,” 170. See also Susan Reid, “Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-
to rethink the historical image of wartime Korea as a time of total denial of desires and interests unrelated to war efforts.

Above all, this chapter seeks to reexamine the patriarchal trope of containing women in the domestic sphere vis-à-vis men’s place in the public sphere through careful analyses of the ambivalent nature of dietary advice, which, in essence, perpetuated gender hierarchies while simultaneously elevating women’s status in a changing society. When the authors of dietary advice presented domestic food consumption as a war effort, it elevated the status of housewives and transformed their domestic area, more specifically, the kitchen, into a crucial site for mobilization, or simply put, a public sphere. Accordingly, women who were now anointed as main actors in domestic—but also public—food consumption, willingly joined public discussions. For instance, six out of eight participants in the aforementioned roundtable discussion were female intellectuals, which incidentally took place at the most prestigious women’s college in Korea. But the discussion invited not only the upper echelon of society but also included ordinary housewives. They, too, opined what constituted ideal roles for women in domesticity as well as the public discourse arena open to women.

Examining their diverse opinions on ideal female subjectivity, this chapter pays special attention to the aspirations of the urban middle-class (in terms of region and class). At first

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glance, dietary advice seemed to severely condemn bourgeois urbanites who allegedly consumed only refined foods or craved modern, cosmopolitan, and luxurious lifestyles. However, written by privileged elites, nestled in the burgeoning colonial capital city, dietary advice revealed their modernist fantasies for a happy bourgeois domestic life, an ideal modern lifestyle that was globally circulated in and out of Korea. 8 The lifestyle presented was replete with “modern” values that was hardly oppressive but instead aspiring—from efficiency and health, to culinary pleasures and family intimacy. More importantly, dietary advice channeled middle-class women’s ambitions to form a modern subjectivity based on the ideal image of a “scientific housewife” who would realize all the positive values in their domestic space. 9 Rather than simply denounce such gendered middle-class aspiration as a selfish pursuit, dietary advice, as part of fascist ideology’s yearning for harmony, promised that these private interests in the domestic space could exist harmoniously or, at the very least, be mutually reinforced through scientific and efficient food consumption.

By probing deeper into this assurance, this chapter will show how dietary advice unveiled, instead, the anxieties of the urban middle-class about losing their social status and lifestyle in time of shortage. When middle-class female authors dreamt of becoming the sole scientific manager of their domestic space without any help from other female subjects like lower-class housemaids, this desire for social distinction coexisted with anxieties of having to supplement the housework with their own unpaid labor. Additionally, while the urban middle-class sought out tasteful and diverse foods as a way to articulate their class identity, this desire

9 For the idea of scientific housewifery in the 20th century, see, for instance, Laura Shapiro, Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) and Chapter 2 of Sand, House and Home in Modern Japan.
was accompanied by anxieties of wartime material constraints. By tracing how desires and anxieties were negotiated, resolved, or left unfulfilled under wartime conditions, this chapter posits dietary advice as neither seamless nor a monolithic ideology.

Women on Food Consumption on the Homefront

By targeting female audience and housewives in particular, dietary advice functioned as a gendered discourse that implored women to be responsible for every step of food consumption in the household. Hong Sŏnp’yo, a male culinary specialist stressed the centrality of housewives in the kitchen, stating “the biggest responsibility of housewives is kitchen management.”\(^{10}\) Female views were not very different when it came to associating women with the kitchen. Paek Sugyŏng, a female dietician from the Department of Hygiene at Kyŏnggi Province remarked, “the majority of the [food problem] is the responsibility of housewives who are in charge of the kitchen.”\(^{11}\) This shared view on women’s role was visualized in the cover image of the special issue of Sŏdōin (Total Mobilization) on the food problem. The image captures a side view of a woman donning an apron standing over the stove in a kitchen, which assumes a women’s place in the kitchen (Figure 4-2).\(^{12}\) All the remarks in dietary advice, including this image, defined kitchen work as a feminized task.

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10 “Sinch’unjŏngdam 1” [New Year Roundtable Discussion 1], Maeil sinbo Jan. 1, 1940.
11 Paek Sugyŏng, “Chosŏn ŭmsik ŭi kaeryang: yŏngyang e chungsim ŭl tura” [Reform of Korean Cuisine: Focus on Nutrition], Maeil sinbo July 9, 1941.
12 The cover of Sŏdōin [Total Mobilization] (Nov. 1939).
As recent research on gender roles in wartime Korea shows, these gendered claims for women to take on the duty of cooking necessitate a nuanced reading rather than simply pointing out the conservative ideology of domesticity.\(^{13}\) Above all, it is worth noting that dietary advice did not leave food consumption as a private matter. In dubbing the home as a women’s “battle field” (chŏnjang),\(^{14}\) dietary advice recognized the household as not only a private space but also a public space, inferring that domestic food management was nothing short of a conventional war effort. Aforementioned image is a prime example. The classic scene of domesticity, which depicts a woman caught in the midst of meal preparation, is now reframed under the title of total mobilization (Figure 4-2). Another image in the pages of Kokumin sŏryoku (whose name had


\(^{14}\) “Papsang ŭn kanshojage: oen sikkŭ ka han sang esŏ mŏkcha” [Simplify Dining Menus: All Family Members Should Dine in One Table], Maeil sinbo Nov. 30, 1943.
changed from Sōdōin) shows a more active participation by the female figure. This time, taking
place outside the domestic space, the image depicts a woman dressed in a conventional attire of
housewife, literally pumping nutrients into the bodies of two salubrious male figures through a
hose (Figure 4-3).  

If the shifting discourse on food consumption signaled the transformation of the private
sphere of the domestic kitchen into a gendered site of public concern, then the expansion
provided an opportunity for women to have their voices heard. For instance, Minami Gakuko,
who represented the highest echelon of colonial society as the wife of the Governor General of
Korea, appeared in the public as a role model for all housewives in food campaigns. Infamous
female Japanese settlers like Tsuda Setsuko from the Green Flag League also took active
part in food campaigns alongside other everyday life reform campaigns. The most impressive social
groups were, however, professionals in educational institutions. Female professors obtained
academic positions at recently established departments of home economics in institutions like
Sungmyŏng Women’s College (1938) and Sŏngsin Women’s School (1938), which followed the
curriculum of Ehwa Women’s College (1929), the first school to open the department of home
economics in Korea. But the ivory tower was not the only place for engagement for scholars.
Female organizations aiming at reforming everyday life also recruited female scholars for their
cause. Established in 1937 in cooperation with the Government General of Korea (GGK),

15 “Kachinuku shokuseikatsu kyōka, yomoyamabanashi,” Kokumin Sōryoku 4 no. 5 (May, 1942), 57.
16 “Mobōm ūn uri put’ô” [Let’s be the Role Model], Mael sinbo Nov. 12, 1939.
17 “Nokki yōnamaeng puinbu chuch’oe, kyŏljŏn ha ū puin kangjwa” [The Green Flag League Hosts Lectures for
Housewives at War], Mael sinbo Feb. 5, 1942. For the details of the league, see Jun Uchida, Brokers of Empire:
18 For the development of home economics during the colonial period, see Kim, Sinŏmgwi ha kŭndae jajok ŭi
hyŏngsŏng kwa chendŏ, 266-269, Pak Sŏnmi, “Kajŏngahk iranŭn kŭndaejŏk chisik ŭi hoektŭk: Ilche ha yŏja Ilbon
yuhaesaeng ŭi chungsim ŭo” [Acquisition of Domestic Science as Modern Knowledge: With a Focus on Female
Students Studying in Japan], Yŏsŏng-hak nonjip 21, no. 2 (2004): 77-109, and Hyae-wol Choi, “The Missionary
Home as a Pulpit: Domestic Paradoxes in Early Twentieth-Century Korea” in Hyae-wol Choi and Margaret Jolly
Korean Women’s Problem Research Association (*Chosŏn puin munje yŏn’guhoe*), for instance, became an important platform for eminent female Korean educators and scholars.

Song Kŭmsŏn (1905-1987) was one of the most impressive academic figures in the field for her involvement in diverse wartime activities. As a professor of Ehwa Women’s College and, later, the president of another prestigious institution, Toksŏng Women’s School, Song played an active role in wartime interventions including food consumption. Song was a frequent guest in roundtable discussions, guest lectures, and radio programs. More importantly, in 1940 she was one of only three women to join the GGK’s Committee for Investigation of Economic and Nutritious Meals (*Kyŏngje yŏngyang chosa wiwŏnhoe*) whose task was to make ideal wartime menus. Because of her extended cooperation with the state, Song and almost all of the other female intellectuals appearing in this chapter had to reconcile their dual reputation as pioneering social reformers on the one hand, and ardent Pro-Japanese intellectuals, on the other hand.

Like their elite counterpart, ordinary women, too, participated in the public discourse. With membership at a whopping 4.25 million, The Patriot Units offered a space for ordinary women to join wartime food management measures by collecting information on household members and issuing ration cards. Household sections in newspapers, cooking classes, and food tasting events also offered channels for common housewives to partake in the public discourse. Writings and practices by these female elites and ordinary women—as well as works

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19 The other two were Tsuda Setsuko and Yi Sukchong, the founder and president of Sŏngsin Women’s School in 1939. For the committee, see Chapter 3.

by male authors such as Kim Hojik, a nutrition scientist at Sungmyŏng Women’s School—offer a window into the norms, aspirations, and anxieties surrounding wartime food consumption.

Moral and Scientific Housewives for Efficient Food Consumption

Like other countries at war, the wartime in Korea was also a time of moral suasion through public campaigns. The Korean peninsula was hardly a hotbed of military conflict. And yet, wartime campaigns painted the homefront as an extension of the battlefield, declaring practices of everyday life, from instilling strong work ethics to something as minute as traffic rules, public etiquettes, and personal health care, as a matter of war effort. Food consumption, too, became a public ethical issue requiring militant participation and vigilance of imperial citizens. The authors of dietary advice did not shy away from using terms and rhetoric laden with militant lexicon. A manual entitled “Eating for the Final Battle,” for instance, urged Korean consumers to “treat foods with extreme care” and “try to return the holy kindness of the emperor.” Although this manual, penned by a state-affiliated organization, had no rivals for its blunt imperial language, other dietary advice texts echoed the official tone in mobilizing individual consumers to behave patriotically in consideration of the ensuing war and the empire. In short, food consumption became an issue of ethics.

21 For instance, O Miil, “Ch’ongdongwŏn ch’eje ha saenghwal kaesŏn k’aemp’ein kwa Chosŏnin ū ilssang: singmin tosi Inch’on ū sahoejŏk konggansŏng kwa kwallyŏn hayŏ” [Life Improvement Campaigns under the Total War System and the Everyday Life of Koreans: In Relation to the Social Spatiality of the Colonial City, Inch’on], Han’guk tongnip undongsa yŏn’gu 39 (Aug. 2011): 235-277 and Chapter 7 and 8 of Uchida, Brokers of Empire.
23 “Ch’onghu ū kyot’onghon hwakpo” [Securing Traffic Discipline on the Homefront], Maeil sinbo Apr. 12, 1941.
24 “Ch’onghu ū ch’innŏl undong” [Kindness Movement on the Homefront], Maeil sinbo July 16, 1942.
25 “Ch’onghu ū kŏnmin undong kakchi esŏ o-wŏl ir-il put’ŏ chŏn’gae” [Healthy Citizen Movement on the Homefront Begins from May the 1st All Across the Country], Maeil sinbo Apr. 20, 1942.
26 Singnyang hyŏphoe chibu Chosŏn ponbu, “Kyŏljŏn siksaenghwal tokpon 1” [Manual for Eating Life for the Final Battle 1], Maeil sinbo June 24, 1943.
Conservation of food was always presented in dietary advice as the most urgent act for imperial consumers.\textsuperscript{27} The aforementioned manual, “Eating for the Final Battle,” lays out the stakes: “Without a doubt, producing a lot of foodstuffs is the most urgent task, but rational food conservation is equally important. … Victory for war lies in being satiated with the minimum amount of food.”\textsuperscript{28} As the title of the most famous wartime food campaign, Rice-Saving Campaign (chŏlmi undong) implies, rice was indeed the most discussed item in the food discourse, but dietary advice sought to minimize consumption of almost all foodstuffs.\textsuperscript{29} Theoretically, everything, no matter how minute or insignificant, should be conserved for the war effort. Even “a single grain of rice,” “a clump of grass,” or “a drop of water” mattered, for such minutia, when linked back to the aggregate of the imperial masses, were seen as having an enormous impact on “the power of the country,”\textsuperscript{30} “military strength,”\textsuperscript{31} and “the treasury.”\textsuperscript{32} According to this rhetoric, the line between eating as a private matter and eating as a public matter was blurred, and when the two conflicted, the priority of the latter over the former was greatly stressed in the name of messi hŏkŏ, self-sacrifice for the sake of the whole and the empire.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{28} Singnyang hyŏphoe chibu Chosŏn ponbu, “Kyŏljŏn siksaenghwal tokpon 1.”
\textsuperscript{29} For more details about the campaign, see Yi, \textit{Ilche ha chŏnsi nongŏp chŏngch’ae kwa nongch’on kyŏngje}, 179-181 and 382-386.
\textsuperscript{30} “Ch’usŏk ŭn irŏk’e: ssal ŭl chŏryak hapsida! han t’ol ŭi ssal to nara ŭi him” [Spend Ch’usŏk Like This: Let’s Save Rice! Even a Grain of Rice is the Power of the Country], \textit{Maeil sinbo} Sept. 26, 1939.
\textsuperscript{31} “Han p’ogí p’ul to chŏllyŏk i toenda” [Even a Clump of Grass Can be Military Strength], \textit{Maeil sinbo} Aug. 14, 1943.
\textsuperscript{32} “Sudonmul han pangul to pobae kach’i akkija” [Let’s Conserve Even a Drop of Tap Water], \textit{Maeil sinbo} July 15, 1943.
\textsuperscript{33} Matsuzaki Hirosui [松崎博翠], “Kessen shoku seikatsu no jissai ni tsuite” [On the Practices of Eating for the Final Battle] in O Ōk ed., \textit{Kessen shokuseikatsu} [Eating for the Final Battle] (Keijō: Seikatsu kaigakusha, 1942), 44.
The idea of minimizing food consumption in dietary advice was frequently accompanied by the idea of eating substitute foods (taeyongsik) instead of foods proper, which were scarce and thus expensive. The most debated topic regarding food consumption was substitutes for rice, which included not only miscellaneous grains such as barely and millet, but also zucchini and oriental melon. The comprehensive list, however, extended well beyond rice substitutes to include frogs and grasshoppers as replacement for beef.34 As the war dragged on, Korean consumers were asked to collect wild plants and hunt animals like hunter-gatherers rather than rely solely on a limited supply of vegetables and meat.35 If people can’t act like hunter-gatherers, as the next chapter examines, dietary advice encouraged food consumers to become food producers by growing plants and livestock in their backyards.

If frugal food consumption and substitutions were praised, the authors of dietary advice were quick to reproach any luxurious, conspicuous, and excessive food consumption as unpatriotic. As historian Sheldon Garon examines in his work on wartime thrift and saving campaigns in Japan, luxury was the enemy on the homefront in not only Japan but also in Korea.36 Indeed, dietary advice enumerated countless unethical examples of decadent and wasteful food consumption. Eating polished rice, for example, was to be “a behavior oblivious to the current time.”37 “Excessive drinking in bars and restaurants or profligate drinking parties”

34 For more detailed list of substitute foods, see Yi, Ilche ha čŏnši nongŏp chŏngch’aek kwa nongch’on kyŏngje, 382-285.
35 Hayashi Taichi, “P’usŏnggwi ŭ ū taeyong singmul ŭl e nagamyŏn mujinjang: yŏngyangbun mank ’o p’ungmī to itta” [Substitute Plants in Replacement of Vegetables are Limitless in Fields: They are Nutritious and Delicious], Maeil sinbo June 20, 1942. See also “Kogi saengsŏn kwa tarŭm ŏmnŭn mettugi ŭ ŭ yŏngyang” [Grasshoppers’ Nutrition are Equivalent to Meat and Fish], Tonga ilbo Oct. 14, 1939 and “Taeyongsik handam (2): kaegori” [Chat on Substitute Foods (2): Frogs], Maeil sinbo Oct. 6, 1942.
37 “Singnyang hwakpo e wibandoenŭn paengmisik e kamsian” [Surveillance on White Rice Meals in Violation of Food Security], Tonga ilbo Dec 9, 1939.
was another “behavior in need of self-restraint (chasuk) during the war.” Discarding still edible leftovers was one of the greatest sins, described as an “extremely inappropriate behavior given the current situation (siguk).”

As can be clearly shown in these moral critiques, the authors of dietary advice demanded Korean housewives to become morally aware, but the call also required them to be intellectually aware by gaining the necessary scientific knowledge to maximize efficient food consumption. The core message about knowledge on nutrition was not to simply save foods _per se_ but to minimize the loss of nutritional value and, to take one step further, to maximize nutritional efficiency in food consumption. In order to maximize nutrition, the elite authors of dietary advice exhorted Korean housewives to learn the ABC’s of nutritional science, that is, the physiological functions of different nutrients, and appropriate foods for each nutrient. And almost every part of food consumption—from choosing the best ingredients and cooking methods that would optimize nutritional value, to keeping hygienic food free from food poisoning and appropriate mastication for complete digestion—became the learning objectives for housewives. Housewives, according to dietary advice, were supposed to become disciplinary subjects armed with precise knowledge and skills to manage food consumption in the most efficient manner.

Yet, all the moral and disciplinary tones in dietary advice do not mean that the advice operated solely in an oppressive and negative manner. Rather, in the dual emphases on morality and knowledge, dietary advice demonstrates how imperial aspirations for moral and efficient female subjects intermingled with modernist aspirations to shape scientific, rational, efficient,

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38 “Chŏnsi ha ŭi saenghwal kwa chŏlju” [Daily Life in War and Moderate Drinking], _Yŏsŏng_ 5, no. 4 (Apr. 1940), 335.
39 “Ssŭregi to sallimyŏn chawŏn i toenda: puŏk ŭi ch’aeso rado hŏtpŏrijī mao” [Even Garbage Can be Resources if Recycled: Don’t Dispose of Vegetables of the Kitchen], _Maeil sinbo_ Aug 3, 1941.
hygienic, and healthy diet for individual benefits. If we look past all the overt militant expressions, which usually appeared at the outset as clichés, the contents of dietary advice were no different than their pre-war counterparts that promoted cosmopolitan ideals for scientific, economic, and healthy eating.⁴⁰

Beyond the sheer material focus on eating, the notion of scientific housewifery embedded in dietary advice was in line with bourgeois female desires to articulate a new subjectivity in the domestic setting. The global discourse on scientific housewifery in the late 19th and early 20th century gained support from modernist intellectuals in the 20s and 30s in Korea, both male and female, as a new type of femininity differentiated from the more conventional image of “wise mother and good wife.”⁴¹ In her work on American female scientists in late 19th and early 20th century, Laura Shapiro points out that American women believed in domestic science movement as a way to gain access to the modern world by “re-creating man’s world in woman’s sphere.”⁴² In a similar manner, as Han Minju’s work on gender roles in wartime Korea demonstrates, housewives, as a kind of scientists in domestic laboratory, constituted one crucial component for ideal wartime femininity in Korea.⁴³ While it is true that the conventional ideology of “wise mother, good wife” only strengthened during the war, the emergence of a new modern subjectivity articulated aspirations that were distinct from the status quo. In the concluding remark to her recipe column, Pang Sinyŏng, for instance, painted a vivid image of a modern

⁴⁰ See, for instance, Pang Sinyŏng, “Chosŏn ŭmsik ūi chaeŭmmi” [Reappreciation of Korean Food], Chosŏn ilbo Mar 14 to 29, 1934. See also Yi Ŭnhŭi, “1930 nyŏndae sinsik yori kangsŭphoe ro pon sangnyuch’ŭng ūi ‘siksaenghwal kaesŏn’” [“Diet Improvement” of the Upper Class Examined through New Cooking Classes in the 1930s], Yŏksa wa hyŏnsil 88 (June 2013): 271-302.
⁴² Shapiro, Perfection Salad, 9.
housewife and addressed her directly: “To be sure, it is difficult to implement [my suggestions] in a complex, extended family system, but it is my hope that in a smaller household it would be possible to make efforts to build a new life through simple, economic, in terms of time and money, and nutritious diet.” Unlike the “traditional” housewife who would be burdened by the extended family, the “modern” housewife, responsible only for her husband and children, would be free to explore more possibilities in her small household with scientific knowledge.

What is distinctive about wartime dietary advice is that its fascist inclinations did not interpret husbandly food consumption habits as a simple sacrifice of individual interests but as a mutual coexistence of individual interests and the public good. Take for example, the popular wartime idea of substitute foods. Despite its negative connotation as inferior foods, the idea of eating substitute foods delivered a positive message of diversifying food choices for individual health and economy. For instance, Han Kudong in the Bureau of Hygienic Sciences (Wisaeng sihŏmso; Eisei shikensho) of the GGK, supported consumption of substitute foods, noting that no food contained all nutrients required for health. Therefore, he argued, “we need to maintain health through a moderate mixture of diverse foods, and only in doing so, we can meet the physiological demand without any imbalances (p’yŏnp’a).” Apart from health benefits, Han insisted that substitute foods were, in fact, far superior as they provide equal or higher levels of certain nutrients at a fraction of the cost. To elite authors like Han, eating substitute foods like sardines instead of beef were not only a means for survival under austere conditions but also a way to ensure a balanced diet for good health.

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45 Han Kudong, “Chosŏn ŭmsik ū kwahakhwa” [Scienfitication of Korean Food], Ch’unch’u 2, no. 4 (Apr 1941), 197-198.
46 Han, “Chosŏn ŭmsik ū kwahakhwa,” 197.
Such claims for individual benefits resonated with the imperialist idea of expanding the scope of food resources for the empire. When the ethos of economic self-sufficiency became the impetus behind invention of new industrial products that would replace materials in short supply,\(^47\) the experts in dietary advice similarly promoted consumption of substitute foods as a positivist step toward “pioneering food resources.”\(^48\) For instance, Kim Hojik argued, “we should abandon the idea that we cannot eat what is unfamiliar, and **expand the scope of foodstuffs.**”\(^49\) Echoing Kim, Hayashi Taichi from the Bureau of Forestry Sciences proposed eating wild plants as a way to maximize “unlimited” food resources already growing on fields, mountains, and along roadside berms.\(^50\) Takai Toshio at Keijō Imperial University, examined in the last chapter, insisted on consuming “unlimited” sardines in the East Sea as a plausible solution to the problem of food shortage.

The concept of community kitchens (*kongdong chubang*), popularized during the wartime, provides another example of how modernist ideals for efficient consumption imbricated with wartime ideals for collective food management. Dietary advice presupposed individual housewives as a voluntary subject willing to improve their diet through scientific knowledge and implementation of proper dietary habits. Based on this assumption, dietary advice authors encouraged individual housewives to understand the basics of nutritional science so that they can calculate the nutritional value of their diet. However, when nutritional experts doubted both the will and the intelligence of individual consumers, they sought different approaches. One option

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\(^{48}\) Ryōyūkai Chōsen honbu, “Shintaisei to shokuseikatsu” [New System and Eating Life], *Kokum sōryoku* 3, no. 2 (Feb. 1941), 81.

\(^{49}\) “Taeyongsik to ch’onghu poguk: aeguksik iranŭn kwannŏn ūl kajija” [ Substitute Foods are Also Patriotic Service in Homefront, Let’s Get Aware that They are Patriotic Foods, Kim Hojik’s Talk], *Maeil sinbo* July 6, 1941.

\(^{50}\) Hayashi Taichi, “P’usŏnggwi ŭi taeyong singmul ūl e nagamyŏn mujinjang.”
was collective management of food consumption. When the state and mass organizations like the Patriotic Units became involved in distributing foods through price control and food rationing, interventions partially displaced individual housewives’ purchasing decisions with the collective calculations of the state, but these measures did not deny the role of individual cooks in the kitchen. Housewives still acted as arbiters, transforming rationed ingredients into meals. A more drastic option was the idea of replacing individual housewives with the collective labor of community kitchens like canteens and cafeterias; an idea popularized in the Japanese empire and other wartime countries.  

Song Kŭmsŏn, for example, expressed her high regard for the efficiency of community kitchens by referring to a case in Tokyo which provided two thousand meals a day at cheap prices in “complete and convenient facilities.” Fujimoto Midori, a professor at Sungmyŏng Women’s School offered a more detailed rationale for community kitchens. Using the data from a community kitchen in Chiba Prefecture in Japan, she presented its superior function to individual housewives’ kitchens in three aspects: decreases in rice consumption, fuel usage, and labor power.

There is no statistics on the total number of community kitchens built in Korea. In the countryside, community kitchens seemed to be popularized as a required facility for cooperative labor units (kongdong chagŏppan). As for the city, brief newspaper features show fragmentary records of business owners establishing community kitchens for their business efficiency. In 1939, for instance, store owners in Hon-machi [Pon-chŏng], one of the most famous commercial

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51 See, for example, Morikawa Kiku and Yamagishi Akira, Kyōdō suiji [Communal Cooking] (Tokyo: Kagaku shugi kōgyōsha, 1941). See also Chapter 6 of Vernon, Hunger and Reagin, “Tischkultur.”
52 “Sinch’unjŏngdam 4,” Maeil sinbo Jan. 9, 1940.
54 See Chapter 1 for more detail.
districts in Seoul, decided to build a community kitchen, aimed at “rationalizing small business shops and saving materials.” In February 1940, the Chamber of Commerce in Pusan decided to provide store employees with “cheap but a variety of nutritious and hygienic meals” made “in large quantity” from “perfectly hygienic facilities.” Now that “housewives in charge of meals will be free from the agony,” one article anticipated, “they can increase efficiency in other housework and in sales.” Referring to a community kitchen in Seoul as an example, Fujimoto Midori at Sungmyŏng insisted, “it is possible to reduce the burden of housewives, and the time for meal preparation can be used to serve the country. For households without children it is possible to work without any concerns about who is going to take rationed items.” In all the praises for community kitchens, from business owners’ increase in profits through efficient food consumption to convenience and benefits to individual households as well as the empire, seemed to coexist as mutual benefits for all parties involved. But behind the rhetoric of easy cohabitation of the private and the public lay multiple tensions, schisms, and negotiations, especially, along the lines of class and gender. This issue will be examined in the next two sections.

Culinary Pleasures to Social Distinction: Housewives as Artist of Life

As many studies have pointed out, eating is more than a sum of nutrients. People do not eat only to relieve hunger or to absorb nutrition. People also eat for pleasure, to experience culinary

56 “Pon-jŏng ūi kongdong chubang: chungsun e ch’akkong” [Collective Kitchen in Pon-jŏng: Construction Begins in Mid-January], Tonga ilbo Jan. 14, 1940.
57 “Eiyō to eisei honi Pusan no kyōdō suiji: sakitsu shōtengai ga hajimeru” [Priority on Nutrition and Hygiene: Collective Kitchen in Pusan Begins from Shopping Districts], Punsan nippo Feb. 9, 1940.
59 Fujimoto, “Kessen shokuseikatsu,” 199.
sensations. Additionally, dietary patterns are determined by desires to express personal and social distinction. On the surface, wartime dietary advice seemed to completely ignore and suppress any yearnings for delicious and decadent foods or the desire to articulate social status through consumption. The authors of dietary advice targeted urban residents in particular for their allegedly luxurious and excessive diet. Against the background of urbanization in the 20s and 30s, affluent cuisine culture in the colonial capital city prospered with commercial restaurants specializing in Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Western cuisines in hotels and department stores. The cosmopolitan food culture constituted the so-called “culture life” (bunka seikatsu) as an ideal modern lifestyle in the city. At the height of war, however, this lifestyle was condemned for its negative connotations such as consumerism, materialism, and superficial imitation of western culture—especially, in contrast to the rural lifestyle. In a roundtable discussion devoted to substitute foods, Kim Hojik stated, “even during the peacetime [rural] Koreans already resorted to substitute foods.” In stark contrast to his affirmation for the rural population, Kim expressed disdain toward what he saw as the reluctant attitude of urban residents. “With little effort,” Kim claimed, “people could get delicious wild plants, plentiful in the fields and mountains, as a substitute for cultivated vegetables that are in short supply,” and yet, urban dwellers, he lamented, were still looking for cultivated vegetables such as water celery (minari) and spinach. In a roundtable discussion dedicated to rice conservation, Kim Yŏnghŭi,
a professor in the Department of Music at Ehwa stated in a similar way, clarifying that “[t]he target of the campaigns for saving rice and promoting miscellaneous grains was, after all, the urban population.” Even daily laborers in the city, she argued, did not want to eat millet or barley in preference of rice. She claimed that the majority of rural people, by contrast, did not eat rice. Based on her binary observation, she urged urban residents to become more “spiritually or socially aware about saving rice.” It is questionable whether urban residents were less cooperative than their rural counterparts in food campaigns as these intellectuals postulated. But the important point is that all the rhetoric reflected wartime ideological discourse that perpetuated a morally pathological image of the city in contrast to the countryside, which was rendered modest and wholesome.

All the critiques of (urban) decadent meals do not mean that desires for culinary pleasures and social distinction surrounding food were out of serious consideration. People would be inclined to eat anything in extreme situations like a famine, but despite an unstable food supply, there was no massive scale famine in wartime Korea. Even during war, food was still an object of longing, especially, for the urban middle-class. For example, an 1941 advertisement for tea appealed to not only aesthetic values, describing the product as having “comprehensive beauty of taste, aroma, and color,” but also the commodity’s association with cosmopolitan culture exemplified by the lady’s permed hair and elegant dress (Figure 4-4). Another example is a cookbook of royal and yangban-class cuisines published in 1939 by Cho Chaho (1912-1976), wherein she expressed nostalgia for the aura surrounding elegant cuisine of the bygone days. In the preface, she stated, “When life was idle, great progress was made in studying food. Each

64 “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 5,” Maeil sinbo Nov. 6, 1939.
65 “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 5,” Maeil sinbo Nov. 6, 1939.
66 This ad was inserted in the article, Chang Hyŏnch’il, “Singnyang sinch’eje wa Chosŏnmi” [New Food System and Korean Rice], Ch’unch’u 2, no.4 (1941.4): 54-61.
household had several recipes, all excellent and special. And because of intense competition, Korean cuisine was extremely developed.‘‘ Cho’s reverence for the great cuisine culture of the simpler days and her desire to revive this tradition was driven by her former yangban background, but the publication of her book during the war years also testifies to the fact that appetite for decent cuisine did not completely disappear even under dire conditions of war. In this situation, dietary advice revealed its subtle attempts to manage aspirations and fantasies of consumers, but in particular, the urban middle-class who longed not only for culinary pleasures but also for social meanings through food as markers of class distinction. Additionally, the advice disclosed their frustrations of having to compromise such fantasies under wartime austerity. For these food experts, managing aspirations and fears of their target audience was a tough task. This task exposed middle-class desires to cultivate a female subjectivity as kind of a creative artists who would not only manage food consumption efficiently but also create diverse recipes for new tastes and, ultimately, a novel life.

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Let’s take substitute foods as an example, again. Substitute foods such as potato and sweet potato were not completely new or bizarre to the Korean palate including the urban residents, but incorporating foods that had long been understood as inferior and commonly associated with famines to part of a regular diet required overcoming deeply ingrained social barriers that created high-status food and low-status food. Indeed, the idea of eating livestock and plants that had never been considered edible unsettled many. When Chŏng Sunwŏn, a female celebrity chef in Chinese cuisine mentioned amaranthus mangostanus (pirŭm) as an edible wild plant, a journalist on the roundtable responded with surprise, “Do you mean the plant for feeding
While promoting food alternatives, the recommender of bees as substitute food conceded, “Although it is the era of substitute foods, it would be a little funny to eat even baby bees.” Sardines were often mentioned as a good substitute for animal fat and protein intake, but as examined in the last chapter, the majority of sardines had been used not for human consumption but for industrial products and fertilizers.

Dietary advice implored people to eschew the cultural and habitual ties between decadent foods and wealth, and between substitute foods and poverty. Hong Sŏnp’yo explained that rice became a staple only recently, at most three hundred years ago, and this became a truism only for a small number of people; in the past, rice was limited for rituals and celebrations. By calling beriberi disease “white rice disease,” Yi Kapsu at Keijō Imperial University attempted to undercut the positive meaning associated with white rice, and, in turn, hoped to elevate the value of substitute foods. Kim Hojik insisted that the miserable image of “surviving on grass roots and tree barks” led Koreans to further disassociate wild plants from other cultivated vegetables and view wild plants as permissible only in the exceptional situation when no other choices were provided. Refuting these ideas as misconceptions, he explained that cultivated vegetables and wild plants were not fundamentally different because all the agricultural crops were chosen from wild plants.

Nonetheless, the issue of culinary pleasures remained a difficult task for the authors of dietary advice. At one end of the extreme, taste was deemed secondary to the demands of

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68 “Taeyongsik chwadamhoe,” 165.
69 “Taeyongsik handam 4: agi pŏl” [Chat on Substitute Food 4: Baby Bees], Maeil sinbo Oct. 8, 1942.
70 “Sinch’un chŏngdam 2,” Maeil sinbo Jan. 4, 1940.
71 “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 7,” Maeil sinbo Nov. 8, 1939.
wartime austerity and nutritional benefits. Stressing the urgency of war, Hayashi Taichi, the author of *Plants for Famine and their Recipes*, exhorted people to endure bad taste for the sake of soldiers in combat and ancestors who had suffered through worse hunger pangs in the past.\(^{73}\)

In response to complaints about unappetizing taste of miscellaneous grains, Yi Kapsu bewailed, “once it passes through the throat, miscellaneous grains would be better in terms of nutrition, but alas, people refuses to because they can’t think past the taste.”\(^{74}\) Yet, he acquiesced that “taste was a cunning thing.”\(^{75}\) Wartime restrictions notwithstanding, people still cared about culinary sensations. Song Kŭmsŏn witnessed that some people polished rice at home with a mortar and pestle when the sale of white rice was prohibited from November 1, 1939.\(^{76}\) Even social elites who would denounce such behavior as immoral conceded to concerns about taste. Fujimoto Midori, a professor at Ehwa, admitted “having a hard time” [*hon i nada*] when she tried non-white rice for the first time.\(^{77}\) As for wild plants, Inoue, the chief of Únsa Science Museum, acknowledged that the smell of wild plants can be so strong that, if not habituated, it could lead to vomit and diarrhea.\(^{78}\)

Even in terms of nutritional efficiency, experts in dietary advice considered taste and other culinary sensations as important factors of diet. It was Kim Hojik who integrated culinary sensation as an essential value for the scientific study of nutritional efficiency. He insisted, “A menu can neglect taste, but the diet will be unbalanced. … Without this balance, food would be

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\(^{74}\) “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 3,” *Maeil sinbo* Nov. 3, 1939.

\(^{75}\) “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 4,” *Maeil sinbo* Nov. 4, 1939.

\(^{76}\) “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 6,” *Maeil sinbo* Nov. 7, 1939.

\(^{77}\) “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 4,” *Maeil sinbo* Nov. 4, 1939.

\(^{78}\) “Tuŏra ch’æeso pujok tūl e nŏllin sannamul nori sama k’ææ unch’i ch’aryŏ mŏkcha” [Alas, Vegetable Shortage! Let’s Gather Wild Plants for Fun and Eat Them in Style], *Maeil sinbo* Apr 19, 1942.
okay in the short term; in the long term, however, nutrient deficiency could take place.”

Criticizing nutritional science that limits its focus to only “chemistry or physiology,” Kim advocated the necessity of new “food sciences” (shokumotsugaku) in consideration of taste and preference formed according to local environments.

Pang Sinyŏng may be said to be the most invested figure in applying culinary sensations to cooking. Pang was most famous for her cookbook, published in 1917 as the first modern cookbook in Korea. Revised and reprinted, her book became a number one bestseller in the cookbook category. She was one of the prominent writers who published not only cookbooks but also food columns and recipes in public magazines and newspapers. When she introduced many recipes in consideration of both nutrition and costs—values pertinent to the wartime, Pang did not restrain herself from using expressions related to culinary sensations such as “delicious,” “vibrantly colored,” and “appetizing shapes.” She stated, “We don’t only eat with the mouth. First, we eat with the eyes, second, eat with the nose, third, eat with the ears, and fourth eat with the mouth.”

Recipes including those of Pang were disseminated through various media outlets in an attempt to satisfy culinary sensations. Nicola Humble reads people’s yearning for decent peacetime meals in her research on British inventions of wartime mock foods that imitated tastes.

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79 Yutakayama Taichi [Kim Hojik], Chōsen shokumotsu gairon [Introduction to Korean Foodstuffs] (Keijō: Seikatsu kagakusha, 1944), 109.
80 Yutakayama, Chōsen shokumotsu gairon, 110.
81 The book did not lose its authority after liberation in South Korea for its reprint for 33 editions. For more details of her life and works, see Kim Sŏngun, “Sinyōng Pang Sinyŏng ūi ŏpchŏk kwa sahoe hwaldong” [New Women Pang Sinyŏng’s Achievements and Social Activities], Yŏsŏng kwa yŏksa 23 (Dec. 2015): 203-244.
shapes, and colors of original foods with substitute ingredients. On the Korean homefront, too, the persistent attempt to imitate culinary sensations of original cuisines was made manifest in the invention of ersatz grains. When the state distributed substitute foods as rice supplements, the state made this connection explicit by integrating the character for rice (mi) in many of the neologisms: myŏnmi (noodle rice), made of wheat powder and buckwheat power, taedumi (soybean rice), made of oil-extracted soybean residue, and pomi (treasure rice) made of corn powder. These ersatz foods invoked rice not only in name but also in form. The powders and residues were molded into “a shape like rice.” New recipes provided information of how to make substitute foods taste similar to the original. A state-invented recipe for making taedumi delicious advised housewives to mix rice and taedumi by the ratio of 4 to 1 and season with salt. Pang Sinyŏng’s recipe for Sinsŏllo provides another example of how wartime culinary text attempted to invent new recipes to emulate the original dish. Pang stated, “Sinsŏllo is loved by everyone, but we think of it as a high-class dish that needs various ingredients and ample cooking time. … However, it is a pity that such a preconception discourages people from even attempting to make this beautiful and special dish. So, I intend to simplify the recipe as much as possible so that everyone can make it easily.” In this statement, she endeavored to compromise

84 Chapter 3 of Humble, Culinary Pleasures. See also Reagin, “Tischkultur” for Nazi German mock foods.
86 “Taedumi pap chinnŭn pŏp” [How to Cook Taedumi], Maeil sinbo May 2, 1943.
87 “Sae singnyang pomi ka tŭngjang” [New Food, Pomi Appears], Maeil sinbo May 26, 1943.
88 “Sikpoguk undong,” Maeil sinbo May 20, 1942.
89 “‘Taedumi to sojung hada’: singnyang oe ro sayong hanŭn kŏt ŭn pigungmin” [‘Taedumi is Also Important’: It is Non-patriotic to Use it for non-Food Usages], Maeil sinbo Apr 20, 1943.
complexity and decadence with simplicity and affordability. Indeed, compared to her 1921
recipe, her 1940 version was basic in terms of ingredients.

Not all recipes were simplified imitations of existing cuisines. Rather, they also aimed at
exploring novel foods and tastes, implying that wartime foods could acquire a different meaning
beyond lesser imitations of the original. Fujimoto invented 100 recipes featuring sardines with a
hope to change the current situation that “99 percent of sardines become fertilizers while only
few reserved for eating.” Kim Hojik boasted his new recipe in a more vivid language, saying
that fatsia shoots would be extremely delicious and fragrant if seasoned with red pepper paste,
and sedum would be great if deep fried. Chŏng Sunwŏn shared her secret that pine tree needles
can make aromatic tea when preserved with sugar for five to six hundred days in the sun.
Noting as his own “magical secret” for making all foods delicious, Hong Sŏnp’yo advised cooks
to add a few drops of vinegar to every dish.

All the attempts to invent new tastes and recipes need to be examined in relation to fascist
vision for novelty in everyday life. Researchers and critics like Susan Sontag point out that
fascist aesthetics reveals a dream of transcending mundaneness of modern life by blurring the
binary between life and art. In Korea, it was Ch’oe Chaesŏ, the eminent literary critics who
yearned to transform life into art as part of his fascist project of making a harmonious life in
which all schisms and conflicts in modernity would be overcome under the fascist rubric of

92 “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 5,” Maeil sinbo Nov. 6, 1939.
93 “Taeyongsik chwadamhoe,” 165.
94 “Taeyongsik chwadamhoe,” 167.
95 Hong Sŏnp’yo, “Kaul panch’an úi migak ch’osanjang úl ssünün pŏp” [Taste of Side Dishes in Autumn: How to
Use Vinegar], Maeil sinbo Sept. 13, 1940.
96 Susan Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism,” The New York Review of Books, Feb 6, 1975 and Alan Tansman, The
imperialization. The specific focus in his 1937 article titled “Life, Order, Art” was to overcome the binary interpretation of life and art as two separate and conflicting categories, that is, life as order and art as impulse. Ch’oe insisted that art and life should be integrated into a unity wherein the creative impulses originating from life would achieve a higher level of order instead of being suppressed for the sake of maintaining a superficial order in everyday life. He argued that such an order, acquired in return for suppressed inner creativity, would not have any value because the life would be nothing but “a death of spirit.” As a meaningful alternative to the moribund life, what he proposed was “aestheticization of life,” whose meaning would be “possessing creative impulses in life as much as possible, and simultaneously, making an order of the whole (chŏnch’ e rŭl chilssŏhw a) as tightly as possible.”

What is noteworthy about Ch’oe’s 1937 article is his intended readership. Published in the popular women’s magazine, Yŏsŏng, Ch’oe summoned women as the ideal subject to achieve the unity of art and life. He explained that an orderly household managed by perfect bookkeeping would seem to form order at first glance but he cautioned that the interior life of the household would be empty. Ch’oe insisted that women hold “more direct responsibility than men” in vitalizing the domestic space. Ch’oe did not explicitly mention food-related works, yet it was palpable to guess that, for him, cooking was not a simple matter of science but as an essential part of materializing artistic life through women’s creativity. The recipe inventors from experts to ordinary housewives did not elaborate the meaning of their recipes as philosophically as Ch’oe did, but for the recipe creators, too, creating new recipes was part of an effort to cultivate middle-class female subjectivity who would invent a new everyday life full of novelty and creativity. For

97 Chapter 5 of Poole, When the Future Disappears.
98 Ch’oe Chaesŏ, “Saenghwal, chilssŏ, yesul” [Life, Order, Art], Yŏsŏng (Dec 1937), 39.
Pang Sinyŏng, cooking was always an enjoyable and creative hobby, as expressed in her frequent usage of the word, “chwimi” (interest). Song Kŭmsŏn urged housewives to think beyond conventions and create their own ways of using available foods. When Hong Sŏnp’yo exhorted housewives to make efforts to research and create their own recipes for substitute foods, studying meant for him not a painful discipline for patriotism but a scholarly and artistic endeavor in creativity and experimentation. Ordinary housewives also created their own recipes in which they expressed their pride in creativity. Newspapers and magazines showcased pride of ordinary housewives with their innovative recipes and other tips. In enjoining her fellow housewives “to study and use their brains,” a housewife named Kim Sukkyŏng shared her recipes for vegetables and wild plants including a grilled tŏdŏk dish described as the perfect meal for a picnic lunch. When Han Oyŏng, a female painter shared her weekly lunch box menu in a newspaper article, her tone was filled with delight for “making every day [meals] different and special with easily available ingredients.”

It is difficult to measure to what extent everyday housewives earnestly followed these recipes written by relatively affluent housewives in possession of literacy and time. But noteworthy, still, are the ways in which dietary advice attended to the aspirations of the middle-class for delicious and decent foods not as a frivolous urge than as a natural part of food culture that ought to be accepted and managed in more subtle ways. And yet, these aspirations of the

100 Pang, “Sin-yŏngyang tokpon,” Katei no tomo 37 (Nov. 1940), 17.
101 Song Kŭmsŏn, “Siguk kajŏngdo kangiwa: usŏm ŭi kajŏng ŭn ragwŏn” [Lecture on Domestic Ethics in the Current Time: A Happy Family is a Paradise], Maeil sinbo Nov. 1, 1941.
102 “Taeyongsik ŭi yŏngyang sŏngjŏk: kip’un yŏn’gu rûl ssaŏ ilbanhwa hadorok him ŭl ssûja, Hong Sŏnp’yo ssi tam” [Nutritional Records of Substitute Foods: Let’s Make efforts to Use Widely through In-depth Research, Hong Sŏnp’yo’s Talk], Maeil sinbo Nov. 23, 1940.
103 “Kungni hapsida panch’an teach’aek 1: sal ro kage hajamyŏn usŏn sigyok ŭl topcha” [Let’s Think about Solutions for Side-Dishes 1: Let’s Increase Appetite to Gain Weight], Maeil sinbo Apr. 28, 1942.
104 “Ton tŏl tŭnŭn ch’ankkŏri ro maeil saektaruge: pyŏndo panch’an ŭi yoilp’yo” [Different Everyday with Side-dishes for Less Money: Weekly Menu of the Side-dishes for Lunch Box], Maeil sinbo Aug. 9, 1942.
middle class were not only about satiating culinary sensations but also pointed to middle-class housewives’ aspiration to cultivate their subjectivity as an artist to build a new life. And, as we shall see, this new life ultimately meant a happy middle-class domestic life—a life that should be maintained through knowledge, creativity—and unpaid labor of housewives.

Middle-Class Domesticity, Kitchen, and Labor

In a sense, dietary advice was a discourse about fantasies for a happy middle-class family through good diet. And in this imagination, the family was invariably a nuclear family consisting a husband, a housewife and their children, a family unit that began to emerge in Korea since the 1920s and idealized as an intimate family system.105 When Song Kŭmsŏn advised families to eat together at one table rather than at separate tables “for the sake of economizing time and labor,”106 she insisted that the experience of dining together could also foster “family’s intimacy” (tallan).107 In an attempt to challenge Korean people’s enduring habit of eating a heavy breakfast as a way to save food, Hong Sŏnp’yo presented an image of an entire family gathered around a dining table reflecting on the day over a meal.108

This aspiration was definitely gendered since the main architect responsible for realizing the intimate family was, unsurprisingly again, housewives who would be entrusted to provide the perfect meals for her family with scientific knowledge, creativity, and emotional care, but without monetary compensation, that is, as a labor of love. Hong Sŏnp’yo declared that cooking

105 Kim, Singminji ha kŭndae kajok ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chendŏ, 286-318.
107 Song Kŭmsŏn, “Pisangsi wa pwŏk.”
108 Hong Sŏnp’yo, “Siksa pangbŏp ŭi kaesŏn” [Reform of Table Manners], Maeil sinbo Nov. 1, 1941.
for the family with one’s own hands was the utmost duty of housewives in ensuring “the peace and comfort of a household.” Many women also accepted this role with little protest. Ch’a Sabaek, an educator, claimed it would be preposterous to let strangers (nam) cook “meals for their loving husbands, because they had to be made and served with devotion and love.”

Although the gendered association of the domestic sphere continued to persist, the idea of intimate bourgeois domesticity helped women call on men’s cooperation with domestic management. A roundtable discussion provides a good source for tracing such a call. Song Kŭmsŏn demanded more cooperation from husbands by posing the question, “How can they come home late drunk when wives wait for them until meals get cold on the table?” Though worded indirectly, she places the blame squarely on men’s frequent dining out as a threat to maintaining a happy family life not only in terms of financial loss but also in terms of jeopardizing the intimacy between husband and wife. Challenging Song, Hong Sŏnp’yo, who was the most conservative among the group, defended men’s action as a matter of upholding one’s social obligation that was beyond their control. The most revealing and tension-filled moment between the two genders came when Song urged men to bring lunch boxes for the sake of the household economy. Mr. Cho, a journalist, expressed his reluctance as a matter of inconvenience. Yi Sŏksin, a biochemist at Severance Medical School, who had otherwise expressed the most progressive view supporting men’s cooperation in tackling household work, also answered negatively, “In that matter, I, too, disagree.” Song reiterated the point that “Men’s understanding and cooperation is absolutely needed.” In an attempt to alleviate tension, Hong

109 Hong Sŏnp’yo, “Singmo kigŭn” [Housemaid Shortage], Maeil sinbo July 8, 1939.
110 Ch’a Sabaek, “Hyangnak t’oech’i wa sin-saenghwal ŭi panghyang: singmo yumo tunŭn pŏrŭt ŏpsaenŭn kŏt ŭn süwit’ŭ hom ŭl mandŭnŭn pigyŏl igido hada” [Eradication of Hedonism and the Direction of New Living: To Remove the Habit of Hiring Maids is Also a Secret to Make a Sweet Home], Maeil sinbo July 26, 1940.
111 I owe this idea to An, “Chŏnsi ch’eje wa kajŏngsŏng.”
Sŏnp’yo responded to Song’s firm statement with levity, “Please forgive us, for Korean men are not the only culprit.” Despite the lighter turn, this small episode sufficiently captures the contours of wartime discourse on the role of women in domestic food consumption. Contrary to prevailing assumptions, it was hardly a monolithic discourse in total consensus but a discourse ripe with conflicts and tensions along gender lines.

Additionally, tensions among women, in terms of class, demand our attention. The argument for consolidating domestic power to housewives reflected not only the patriarchal desire for division of labor along the gender line but also desires of educated middle-class women who sought to elevate their status within the domestic sphere and secure their role as the sole female manager of the household economy without any interferences from other female subjects such as the mothers-in-law or housemaids. Especially, the female authors of dietary advice literature during the war years frequently berated housemaids from lower-classes and from the countryside for lacking the scientific knowledge to manage an efficient household economy, including food consumption. Song Kŭmsŏn’s condescending attitude toward housemaids stands out in this regard. This female elite remarked, “Moving from the backcountry (ch’on’gusŏk) to Seoul, … they are too ignorant.” Such ignorance, Song insisted, was the reason for inefficiency in the household. As part of a roundtable discussion on housemaids, she remarked on their unskilled handling of coal, a relatively new material for heating, as follows: “Let’s say, heating coal. Because they put out the flame by mistake, I scold them about the room being too cold. Then, they light the fire again, wasting the kindling twice. I am so frustrated.”

Song mentioned not only ignorance but also their indifference to employer’s finances as a reason

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112 “Sinch’un chŏngdam 4” Maeil sinbo Jan. 9, 1940
113 “Sinch’unjŏngdam 1.”
114 “Singmo rŭl t’oron hanŭn chwadamhoe” [Roundtable Discussion on Housemaids], Yŏsŏng 5, no. 1(Jan. 1940), 37.
for housemaid’s heedless consumption. She commented, “No matter how efficient, housemaids are different from their employers. Wasting is inevitable because resources are not their own. … If I cook, sesame oil can last a month, and yet, a housemaid uses the same amount in less than 10 days.”

Beyond their inefficient ways, the female authors with middle-class backgrounds represented housemaids as sources of anxieties when having to share their domestic space. As many studies examined, throughout the colonial period housemaids were represented as discomforting figures in the bourgeois domestic space despite their labor contributions to managing the space. In the worst cases, housemaids occasionally appeared in newspapers as an outside threat to the family life, materially and emotionally, for stealing household items, kidnapping babies, having love affairs with the patriarch, and even killing family members. Wartime dietary advice became an outlet for middle-class women to express their discomforts toward housemaids on various topics, from training housemaids and negotiating their salary, to different ways of addressing them.

All the allegations toward housemaids, however, need to be contextualized in consideration of wartime labor shortage. Although wartime gender ideology stressed the close association between women and domestic labor, female participation in industrial sectors expanded beyond female-dominated textile industry into other realms, such as mining, that had

115 “Sinch’unjŏngdam 1.”
117 For instance, see “Singmo rŭl t’oron hanŭn chwadamhoe.”
been dominated by male labor.\textsuperscript{118} When labor was a scarce commodity, becoming a housemaid conflicted with demands for more workers outside the home. According to the official census of 1940, 135 thousand female domestic employees overwhelmed 55 thousand female factory workers and 6 thousand mining workers in Korea.\textsuperscript{119} When urban middle and upper-class women refused to consider factory work as a viable option, one solution was to divide labor along class lines, with domestic labor reserved for middle-class housewives and factory work for lower-class women. Indeed, when the chief of a state-affiliated employment agency urged housewives to work, he assured them that they would continue to do their household work and housemaids would go to the factories instead.\textsuperscript{120} During the war years, hiring housemaids became evermore difficult due to wage increase. According to the official data of the GGK, the wage of female housemaid had increased more than 40 percent between 1937 and 1942.\textsuperscript{121} To make matter worse for employers, the state decided to impose a tax on hiring housemaids in 1943.\textsuperscript{122} In August 1943, official employment agencies decided against recruiting housemaids.\textsuperscript{123}

Motivated by the changing landscape of the economy as well as by their aspirations for efficiency and a secure bourgeois domesticity, some elite middle-class women chose to part with their housemaids. Kim Pogin, a doctor by training, proudly reported her decision to dismiss


\textsuperscript{119} Recited from Kang Isu, “Kasa sóbisū nodong ū pyŏnhwa ū maengnak kwa silt’ae” [The Context and Reality of the Change in Domestic Labor], \textit{Sahoe wa yŏksa 82} (2009), 222.

\textsuperscript{120} “Il ŏpsi changsewŏl ponaemyŏnsŏ singmo kuhanŭn akp’ye: chŏlmŭn singmo kongjang ponaego assi nūn p’al kŏtko nasŏra” [Evils of Looking for Housemaids While Spending Time Idle: Send Young Housemaids to Factories and Ladies Roll Up Your Sleeves], \textit{Maeil sinbo} May 22, 1942.

\textsuperscript{121} Recited from So, “1920-1930 nyŏndaehanyŏ ū ‘nodong’ kwa ‘kamjŏng’,” 321.

\textsuperscript{122} “Yŏgŭp singmo edo segŭm” [Tax to be Imposed on Female Assistants and Housemaids], \textit{Maeil sinbo} Aug. 18, 1943.

\textsuperscript{123} “Kyŏngsŏng chigŏp sogaeso esŏ kansŏn p’yŏji” [Seoul Employment Agency Stops Job Placement Service], \textit{Maeil sinbo} Aug. 30, 1943.
housemaids in her household: “In terms of the economy, time, and hygiene, everything has become more efficient several times over.” Her new arrangement was presented not only as a logical decision that would be more beneficial to the home life but also as a moral decision toward a “new living” promoted as the ideal lifestyle for wartime.\textsuperscript{124} Yet, such pretentions did not allay anxieties of middle-class women. Like Ko Hwanggyŏng, a sociologist at Ehwa, who confessed, “I had never done any domestic labor,” many elite women relied on at least one or two maids for all their domestic life management.\textsuperscript{125} Being responsible for the entire household without help from housemaids meant not only losing a labor-free domestic lifestyle but also relinquishing outside work that was only feasible with the domestic labor of others. With money and wartime duty on her mind, Song Kŭmsŏn considered firing two out of three female housemaids in her household, but the thought of giving up her career and “staying at home” became a “greater concern.”\textsuperscript{126}

Amid the quandary, in the end it was the material fantasies for commodities such as labor-saving kitchen and other household appliances that came to the aid of anxious middle-class housewives. Affected by the contemporary ideal of Taylorism, home economists and architects since the 1920s had dreamt of designing labor-efficient kitchens as an essential component of the so-called culture house.\textsuperscript{127} Pak Kiryong was the most famous Korean architect who problematized the inefficient layout of Korean “traditional” kitchens for not being a self-

\textsuperscript{124} Kim Pogin, “Sinsaenghwal 14: Singmo rul tuji malgo momso nasŏsŏ irhaja” [New Living 14: Don’t Hire Housemaids and Work Yourself], \textit{Maeil sinbo} Nov. 28, 1940.
\textsuperscript{125} “Chŏlmi yŏn’gu chwadamhoe 1.”
\textsuperscript{126} “Sinch’unjongdam 1.”
\textsuperscript{127} “Kajŏng saenghwal ul ottŏk’e kaesŏn halga” [How Do We Improve Family Life?], \textit{Maeil sinbo} May 4, 1938. For the discourse of reforming kitchen and house, see for instance, Kim Yongbŏm, “Ilche kangjŏngi yŏsŏngji e nat’anan saenghwal kaesŏn tamnom ŭi kyŏnghyang koch’al: churo puŏk kaeryang ŭi naeyong ŭl chungsim ŭro” [Study on the Trend of Life Improvement Discourse in Women’s Magazines in the Colonial Period: Focusing on Kitchen Reform], \textit{Han’guk chugŏ hakhoe nonmunjip} 22, no. 4 (Aug. 2011): 51-61. See also Chapter 2 of Sand, \textit{House and Home in Modern Japan} for the application of Taylorism to kitchen reform in Japan.
contained space with scattered cooking functions in other spaces such as the washbasin and sauce jars in the courtyard and the rice-chest in the main floored hall (*taech’ŏng*). Such inefficiencies in Korean domestic architecture caused unnecessary movement of housewives, criticized Pak. Aiming at minimized movement, reformers like Pak attempted to make a new independent and self-contained kitchen where all activities for food preparation and consumption could be performed in one place with convenient cooking facilities (Figure 4-5). In line with this trend, wartime female intellectuals expected labor-efficient kitchens to eventually eliminate the need for housemaids. Hwang Sindŏk, the president of Kyŏngsŏng Women’s School, urged kitchen reform as a precondition for removing housemaids from domestic space. She criticized that inefficient kitchen structure made housewives take shoes off two or three times to move around even for discarding water down the drain. Song Kūmsŏn’s claim for reformed kitchen as the first precondition of removing housemaids was also in line with other reformist opinions about “inefficient” Korean kitchens.

To be sure, it was not feasible to build new houses or to renovate the kitchen in the wartime. The more plausible reform was to purchase labor-saving conveniences. Electronic appliances such as refrigerators were a rarity even in the capital city. Electronic rice cookers were yet to be invented. Under such conditions, the most labor efficient appliance was the western-style stove, called in various names such as *sūt’obu, renji*, and *kollo* at the time.

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128 For his idea of new kitchen and house, see Pak Kiryong, “Puŏk e taehaya: wich’i wa kujo ŭi kaeryang” [On Kitchen: Reform of Location and Structure], *Tonga ilbo* Jan. 1, 1938. For studies on Pak, see Chŏng Ch’annim and Kim Hyŏnjŏng, “20-segi ch’o Han’guk kwa Yurōp ŭi puŏk kyeheok t’ucksŏng e kwanhan pigyo yŏn’gu: Pak Kiryong ŭi kaeryang puŏk kwa Togil p’urangk’upa’urut’u puŏk tl chunhjim ūro” [Comparative Study on the Characteristics of Kitchen Plans in Korea and Europe: With a Focus on Pak Kiryong’s Reform Kitchen and Frankfurt Kitchen], *Han’guk sillae tijain hakhoe* 18, no. 2 (Apr 2014): 50-60.


130 “Sinch’un chŏngdam 1,” *Maeil sinbo* Jan. 1, 1940.
charcoal and firewood were also in short supply as much as labor,\textsuperscript{131} stoves as reformed heating and cooking devices were expected to replace “traditional” fireplace and heating systems, \textit{agungi} and \textit{ondol}, which had been an object for reform throughout the colonial period for many reasons including labor and fuel efficiency.\textsuperscript{132} In a roundtable, Song Kūmsŏn praised the time-saving feature of the stove, stating, “These days, it is possible to cook various kinds of meals such as sweet potatoes, rice, and fish \textit{simultaneously} with a stove.”\textsuperscript{133} In January 1939, one year after Pak Kiryong suggested the aforementioned blueprint for a reformed kitchen in \textit{Tonga ilbo}, one of the two major newspapers in Korea, the newspaper introduced three model kitchens in use. Among the kitchens, a kitchen owned by a person named Yi Myŏnhyŏk boasted its efficiency thanks to a western-style stove as well as other appliances (Figure 4-6).\textsuperscript{134} Despite its compact size at approximately 3.3 square meters, the article boasting, “this kitchen with a small stove can cook meals for eight persons only for 10 \textit{chŏn} a day.” However, the newspaper article obscured the simple fact that money was required to have such an efficient kitchen by omitting important information about Yi’s socio-economic status as a professor at Severance Medical School and a graduate from Columbia University in biology. Still, authors of dietary advice like Song Kūmsŏn insisted that such a kitchen with a stove was not a mere fantasy but a realizable commodity even for people who were not as affluent as Yi. “With the money saved from foregoing housemaids,”

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Cha’oe Pyŏngt’ae, “Chŏnsi ch’eg han ilche ŭi mulcha sugŭp mit t’ongje chôngch’aek: Kyŏngsŏng ŭi sint’an sugŭp t’ongje rŭl chungsim ūro” [The GGK’s Policies on the Supply and Regulation of Daily Commodities under Wartime Rule: With a Focus on Charcoal and Firewood in Seoul], \textit{Yŏksa wa hyŏnsil} 53 (2004):255–82.
\item “Singmo rŭl t’oron hanŭn chwadamhoe,” 37.
\item “Saenghwal kaesŏn silch’onbo: chubang ŭi kaeryangan” [Records of Life Improvement Practice: A Reform Plan for Kitchens], \textit{Tonga ilbo} Jan. 3, 1939.
\end{enumerate}
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she argued, “one can reform the house and make the kitchen more convenient.” Although Song’s suggestion is made to seem plausible, it obscures another simple yet crucial fact: labor-saving appliances that which abet a happy, middle-class domesticity can only materialize at the expense of unpaid domestic labor of housewives.

(Figure 4-5)  (Figure 4-6)

Conclusion

A scholar on English cookbooks observes that culinary texts tell us, “hopes and fears, the tastes and aspirations, the fantasies and paranoias, and the changing social roles of its particular historical moment.” In a similar pursuit, this chapter has examined wartime dietary advice literature under the premise that the texts are not simply a collection of technical guides but a

135 Song Kŭmsŏn, “Chŏllŭmbari saenghwal ŭl ch’ŏngsan hago suip chich’ul ŭi hamnihwa” [Clean Up Crippled Life and Rationalize Income and Expense], Tonga ilbo Jan. 8, 1940.
136 Humble, Culinary Pleasures, 2.
A compilation of multiple aspirations of the time. Rather than reading the advice as a singular manifestation of imperial desire to indoctrinate colonial subjects into servicing the empire by maximizing food utility, this chapter sought to trace the more dynamic relations among them, with a special focus on urban middle-class women’s own aspirations to cultivate their new subjectivity, enjoy culinary pleasures, and form a bourgeois domestic lifestyle. At times all the aspirations looked to befit the wartime norms for ideal female subjectivity, efficient food consumption, and total harmony between the public and the private. But when it came to issues of culinary pleasure, social distinction, and middle-class women’s relations to other female subjects, dietary advice was filled with tensions, anxieties, and dilemmas that unsettled the wartime norms for efficient food consumption and the total unity of the empire. The next chapter on urban gardening will continue the task of exploring norms, aspirations, and anxieties of the wartime by shifting its focus to male subject formation in domestic gardens.
Chapter 5
Cultivating Food and Subject: Urban Gardening on the Korean Homefront

On a spring day in March 1941, Minami Jirō, the Governor General of Korea, joined a group of his staff members in performing a visual demonstration of peasant farm work in the backyard of the Government-General of Korea (GGK) building in Seoul.1 “Although the sky was a bit overcast,” one newspaper article recounted, “the warm spring breeze made it a good day to go out with a pickax.” “With beads of sweat forming on his forehead,” the article continued, Minami “worked like an energetic peasant,” “with his jacket off, tilling the ground with a pickax, shoveling, and carrying soil”2 (Figure 5-1). The 3,000 p’yŏng (1 p’yŏng is 3.3 square meters) lawn had been previously used by high-rank officials to practice golf, but in consideration of the wartime food problem, the colonial administration decided to convert the lawn into a productive farm, assigning one p’yŏng for each of the 3,000 GGK staff members.3 Minami emphasized the significance of the decision, asking rhetorically, “How can we let such an expansive yard be idle? If daikon, cabbage, and tomato are planted and grown there, won’t they be an excellent source of food?”4

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1 “Konghanji hwaryong ŭi sibŏm: ch’ongdokpue ilp’yŏng nongwŏn kŭmil ch’ongdok, ch’onggam i kŭllo ŭi cheilch’u” [A Model Case of Utilizing Idle Land: One-P’yŏng Farm in the GGK, Today, the Governor General and the Inspector General Does the First Shovel of Labor], Maeil sinbo [Daily News], Mar. 23, 1941.
2 “Konghanji hwaryong ŭi sibŏm,” Maeil sinbo, Mar. 23, 1941.
3 “Nongjang ŭro pyŏnhanŭn Kyŏnghoeu twi kolp’újang: ch’ongdokpu só ilp’yŏngnongwŏn undong ŭl sibŏm” [A Golf field in the back of Kyŏnghoe Tower is in Transformation into a Farm: The GGK Gives a Demonstration of One-P’yŏng Farm Campaign], Maeil sinbo, Feb. 26, 1941.
4 “Konghanji hwaryong ŭi sibŏm,” Maeil sinbo, Mar. 23, 1941.
This performance in the backyard of the GGK building was part of a larger wartime food production campaign, called the One-P’yŏng Farm Campaign (*Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn undong*), initiated by the Korea League for Total National Mobilization (*Kungmin ch’ongnyŏk Chosŏn yŏnmaeng*) in January of 1941.5 Like the Victory Garden movements in other wartime countries,6 this campaign exemplified the total war regime’s effort to mobilize every available piece of homefront land in order to maximize food production. Driven by urgent concerns over food shortages and price hikes, especially for vegetables, the semi-state organization headed by the Governor General launched the campaign with the stated directive of repurposing every inch of idle land on the peninsula for food production.7 In particular, the campaign targeted urban or

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5 This quasi-state mass organization played a central role in wartime mobilization including the food production campaign. See Ch’oe Yuri, *Ilche malgi singminji chibae chŏngch’ae kwa nongch’on hyŏng* [Study on the Policy of Colonial Rule in the Late Colonial Period] (Seoul: Kukhak charyŏwon, 1997).


peri-urban lands—not only public spaces like the GGK backyard but also, and more importantly for this chapter, private domestic gardens. The previous chapter examined how wartime food consumption campaigns urged Koreans, especially, urban residents, to be efficient food consumers. Rather than limiting such efforts to consumption, however, the gardening campaign went a step further in urging urbanities to become food producers who would cultivate food crops in their backyards like farmers in the countryside.

Examining this food production campaign with a special focus on domestic gardens in the city, this chapter goes beyond the immediate concern for material food production to consider subject formation in relation to space. Namely, this chapter reads the campaign as a discourse of male subject formation regarding ideal masculine subjectivity in a space defined as home in a dual sense, that is, the domestic space on the homefront. While the previous chapter dealt with women and cooking in the domestic kitchen, this chapter is about men and gardening in the domestic garden. Gardening discourse seldom identified a specific gender as the major duty holder of domestic garden management, alluding that everyone, regardless of gender, was responsible for domestic gardens. Gendered target audiences were often missing in gardening discourse or were replaced by genderless subjects such as “uri” (we). Yet, this does not mean that gardening discourse was gender-blind. Rather, the omission of gendered subjects should be interpreted as a manifestation of strong gendered implications in gardening discourse. The notion of a universal, genderless subject most often assumes the male as a default model that can be applied universally. Modern discourses summon specific gendered subjects only when certain actions and spaces are not considered a task and space of the universal subject, which is often to say the white, bourgeois male.\footnote{8 I would like to thank Na Si Heo for this helpful suggestion.} As the last chapter showed, for instance, wartime food

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\footnote{8 I would like to thank Na Si Heo for this helpful suggestion.}
consumption discourse used gendered titles such as “housewives” to refer to an explicit target audience with an assumption that the domestic kitchen was not a universal space but rather a female space. In so doing, this discourse inadvertently excluded males from the space and assigned kitchen management solely to women. In contrast, the absence of gendered titles in wartime gardening discourse rendered gardens as a space where male gardeners like Minami could play a certain role with other subjects. Furthermore, gardening discourse, almost exclusively produced by male authors, viewed male gardeners not just as one participant but as the main agent to manage the domestic garden.

Analysis of male subject formation in gardening discourse gains greater potency when considered in terms of social categories like region—and, most importantly, class. Resolutely anti-urban and anti-bourgeois, gardening discourse maintained a highly moralistic tenor toward the urban middle-class who allegedly reserved their gardens for the idle pursuits of aesthetics and leisure. Rather, the ideal male gardener in the city would be defined, like housewives, as loyal imperial subjects willing to labor for the public good, that is, the victory of the empire, even in their private space. Gardens, in short, should be imperial spaces where bourgeois garden owners could prove their morality, patriotism, and utility through food cultivation for the empire. Such imperialist, moralistic, and anti-class norms, however, did not completely deny the self-interests or aspirations of the urban bourgeois class. Rather, wartime gardening discourse presumed self-interested bourgeois subjects willing to maximize individual benefits that could be gained from gardening, ranging from economic and nutritional, to environmental and psychological. More specifically, gardening discourse presented domestic gardens as a kind of gendered bourgeois utopia in which a male gardener might cultivate not only an ideal bourgeois masculine self (demonstratively energetic, rational, productive, and caring), but also a desirable bourgeois domestic life anchored in wealth, security, stability, and harmony with his wife and children. If
managed properly, the logic went, all individual self-interests realized in a private garden could co-exist harmoniously with the wartime mission to build a public utopia, “the Co-Prosperity Sphere of Greater East Asia.” At the same time, however, this ideological fantasy for coexistence between private and public belied a number of crucial contradictions. By examining wartime gardening discourse with this tension in mind this chapter considers the One-P’yŏng Farm Campaign in particular and wartime mobilization in general as more than a simple case of state oppression from above. Rather, it explores a more complex power operation in which people’s aspirations for a better life in domestic and public space were negotiated in a more nuanced manner.

This chapter relies on a close reading of an essay, One-P’yŏng Farm (Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn, 1943), in which the eminent male writer Yi Kiyŏng (1895-1984) recorded his own gardening experience in a state-sponsored newspaper.9 Reading this short piece in juxtaposition with gardening manuals from experts and other ordinary people’s practices scattered in newspapers and magazines will offer a glimpse into how this male bourgeois intellectual’s aspiration to become a desirable male subject in both the domestic and public realm overlapped with the imperialist aspiration to maximize food production, form loyal subjects, and ultimately construct the empire. At the same time, however, Yi’s essay exposes tensions and contradictions behind this seemingly smooth discourse, especially gendered struggles over hegemony in the domestic sphere.

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9 Yi Kiyŏng, “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn” [One-P’yŏng Farm], Maeil sinbo, July 11 to 13, 1943.
Male Gardeners on the Urban Homefront

It is no surprise that soldiers on the battlefield formed the highest model of masculine subjectivity in wartime countries like Korea. And yet, not every Korean man was given the “honor” of becoming a soldier. It was in January 1938 that the Japanese government announced its decision to allow Koreans to become so-called special volunteer soldiers after a series of debates over whether it would be safe to put guns into the hands of the colonial population. By 1943, however, only 16,830 qualified men were chosen by the army in competition with other applicants who had been lured in by the prospect of economic benefit and upward social mobility. The implementing of the universal draft in 1944 theoretically opened the door to every single Korean man to enter the battlefield. By the end of the war, the number of conscripts was estimated to be 190,000 young men.\(^{10}\) Remaining on the homefront still offered chances for Korean men to cultivate a certain form of non-militarized masculine subjectivity if they could contribute to war through labor. Let me revisit a picture in the last chapter (Figure 4-3). Next to an ideal model housewife stand two salubrious-looking male figures, the farmer and the industrial worker—the two pillars of wartime production. Although not every man could work for industry and agriculture, any man—regardless of age, wealth, occupation, residence, and physical strength—could be an ideal male figure by contributing his own labor to the war economy. This was the core message of total mobilization and, more specifically, of the wartime Universal Labor Movement (kaero undong).

In line with the ideology of total war, the One-P’yŏng Farm Campaign delivered a message that Korean men could cultivate not only food but also their own masculine subjectivity.

\(^{10}\) For more details about voluntary soldiers and universal draft, see Chapter 1 of Takashi Fujitani, Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
by participating in food production like peasants. Moreover, gardening discourse compared gardening on the homefront to a martial activity of soldiers. The photographic image of the Governor General in a militarized “national suit” (kungminbok; kokuminfuku in Japanese) in Figure 5-1 delivers a visual assurance that gardening on the homefront was not unlike militaristic actions (See also a man in a military uniform in Figure 5-13). An author of a gardening manual, Sanō Miyoshi, the chief of the South-Chōlla Muan Practical School of Agriculture, reiterated the meaning of Minami’s visual performance in written language, stating that “land is the battlefield; seeds, seedlings, and fertilizers are bullets; cultivation skill is a battle art; planning is a military tactic.” Gardening, both in visual and written discourses, was a militarized, masculine action on the homefront.

In her gendered reading of British imperial expansion, Anne McClintock examines how colonial expansion was imagined by colonizers as a male conquest of virgin land. Her insight lies in her analysis of the coupling of the outward expansion with the inward reconstruction of bourgeois gender relationship within the domestic spaces of Victorian Britain. McClintock’s idea is helpful in interpreting wartime gardening in Korea since the expansionist rhetoric of (re)discovery of land was frequently used to liken gardening in the everyday space of the homefront to a militaristic, adventurous, and masculine expansion of the empire. While other wartime food production plans in Korea focused on the physical transformation of arable lands

11 During the wartime, the state encouraged males in Korea, especially, urban residents to wear kungminbok. For women, baggy pants, called mompe, were encouraged to wear for labor. See Kong Cheuk, “Ilche úi úbok t’ongje wa ‘kungmin’ mandûlgi: paegûi t’anap mit kungminbok changnyô rûl chungsimûro” [Clothing Control of the Japanese Empire in Korea and the Making of “Citizen”: With a Focus on Suppression of White Clothes and Promotion of National Suits], Sahoe wa yôksa 67 (June 2005): 41-83.
13 Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (New York: Routledge, 1995).
through reclamation and irrigation, the gardening campaign focused on (re)discovering the value of allegedly hidden, idle, and therefore, unproductive lands for the purpose of cultivation. The campaign’s outline stated that what lay hidden and idle, if carefully scrutinized, could be transformed for cultivation. Moreover, the potential for such a discovery was everywhere, in private backyards, rooftops, public roadsides, railway lines, riverside, ridges between fields, playgrounds in schools, and vacant lots between buildings. An editorial in a state-mouthpiece daily newspaper added a moral valence to this urgent cause and called for a moral awakening, stressing, “It is unethical to ignore (pangim) the noble land of the nation (chon’gwi han kukt’o) as wasteland.” In a similar exhortation, another editorial used the rhetoric of discovery as follows: “When casting our eyes on the households in the city and turning eyes again to the countryside, it is possible to discover (palgyŏn) unexpected empty land in the corner of the yard and by the fences.” Virtually every corner of the peninsula, no matter how small [ch’ont’o or p’yŏnt’o], became a site for discovery and total mobilization. As the war’s frontline

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14 Since the colonialization of Korea in 1910, the colonial state and landlords, Korean and Japanese, constantly attempted to increase the amount of arable land through reclamation and irrigation. Such efforts continued during the war years despite persistent shortages in construction materials. The GGK revived the Plan to Increase Rice Production (San’ni ch’ungsik kyehoe) in 1940 and launched another large-scale plan aimed at increasing the production of other dry-field grains in 1941. Both plans focused on improving cultivation techniques (kyŏngjongbŏp), but also on strategies to increase food production by expanding arable land through reclamation and irrigation. Between 1940 and 1944, irrigation for 173,700 chŏngbo (1 chŏngbo is 0.99 ha) of lands and 8,000 chŏngbo of reclamation were planned, but only 49,801 chŏngbo were irrigated and no data existed for reclamation. On more details of these two plans, see Yi, Ilche ha ch’ŏnsi nongŏp chŏngch’aek kwa nongch’on kyŏngje, 119-147. Yi Yŏng hun et al., Kŭndae Chosŏn suri chohap yŏn’gu [Study on Irrigation Associations in Modern Korea] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1992) focuses on wartime irrigation projects. Throughout the colonial period, reclamation created about 85,000 chŏngbo lands. See Chapter 5 of Hŏ Suyŏl, Ilche ch’ogi Chosŏn ūi nongŏp: singminji kŭndaehwaron ūi nongŏp kaeballon ūl pip’an handa [Korean Agriculture in Early Japanese Rule: Critique of the Agricultural Development Theory in the Colonial Modernization Theory] (P’aju: Han’gilsa, 2011). But this size was not impressive compared to the total arable land size, 4,934,230 chŏngbo of farming lands existed in Korea as of 1940. Cited from Song, T’onggye ro pon han’guk kŏnhŭndaesa, 128-129.

15 The whole text can be found in “Konghanji rŭl iyong haja” [Let’s Use Idle Land], Ch’un’ch’u [Spring and Autumn] 2, no. 5 (May 1941): 135-137.

16 “Konghanji rŭl iyong haja” [Let’s Use Idle Land], Mael sinbo, June 26, 1943.

17 “Konghanji ŭi iyong” [Use of Idle Land], Mael sinbo, Feb. 15, 1941. Emphasis added.

approached the peninsula in 1944 and 1945, even air-raid shelters (Figure 5-2)\textsuperscript{19} and evacuated lands (\textit{sogaeji}) in preparation for air raids\textsuperscript{20} were added to the list of idle lands. Even if there was no land, a small box of soil could be used for gardening (Figure 5-3).\textsuperscript{21}

(Figure 5-2) \hspace{1cm} (Figure 5-3)

Although the campaign did not exclude the countryside, the major objects and subjects of (re)discovery were urban lands and their residents. Indeed, the campaign’s plan of action identified “individuals in the city” as its primary focus, followed by the countryside and, lastly,

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\textsuperscript{19} Takahashi Kōzō, \textit{Katei engei, sosai no tsukuri kata} [Home Gardening, How to Produce Vegetables] (Keijō: Chōsen Shokusan Ginkō Kyōsaikai, 1944), 29 and “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn kwa chaebae ŭi pigyŏl” [One-P’yŏng Farm and the Secret Know-how of Cultivation], \textit{Maeil sinbo}, Mar. 16, 1945.
\textsuperscript{20} “Sogae kongji ŭi iyong” [Use of Evacuated Land], \textit{Maeil sinbo}. June 8, 1945.
\textsuperscript{21} Takahashi, \textit{Katei engei}, 22 and “Jitsuyōtekina kūhako engei” [Practical Box Gardening], \textit{Kokumin sōryoku} [Total National Power] no. 4 (April 1941).
\end{flushright}
the schools, offices, and factories.\textsuperscript{22} In the time of total war, one article in a popular magazine claimed, “food production could not rely solely on farmers.”\textsuperscript{23} The prolonged war, it insisted, required food self-sufficiency for which “all citizens” should cooperate with the state by using one p’yŏng of empty land for “food provision” (singnyang ch’ungsil).\textsuperscript{24} Vegetable production, even prior to war, did not meet the increasing demand of urban populations in the 1930s.\textsuperscript{25} Though there is no sufficient data on vegetable production and consumption during the war (let alone the last two years), it can be reasonably projected that the war decreased or flattened vegetable production in Korea for many reasons including Chinese vegetable growers’ return to China.\textsuperscript{26} In this context, a self-sufficient food system in the city was stressed for the victory of war. In his gardening manual, for instance, Sanŏ Miyoshi reminded readers that one of the reasons for Germany’s defeat in the World War I was its failure to achieve “a self-sufficient

\textsuperscript{22} “Konghanji rŭl iyong haja”, Ch’unch’u.

\textsuperscript{23} “Konghanji rŭl iyong haja”, Ch’unch’u, 135.

\textsuperscript{24} “Konghanji rŭl iyong haja”, Ch’unch’u, 135.

\textsuperscript{25} It is a little tricky to provide precise data on vegetable consumption and production in Korea due to changes in official statistics and missing data in the last wartime years. Still a statistical trend shows that, during the 1930s, vegetable consumption had increased in Korea as urbanization and industrialization increased income of urban households. According to his own estimates based on official statistics, economic historian Pak Sŏp explains that the money value of vegetable consumption had steadily increased by 30 percent from the mid-20s until the end of 1930s from 47,717 thousand wŏn in 1925 to 67,859 thousand wŏn in 1937 and 69,503 thousand won in 1938. Vegetable production in Korea was also increasing in the 1930s, but it always could not meet the demand. In 1937, for instance, production remained at 63,549 thousand wŏn, 4,310 thousand wŏn lower than demand. In 1938, production in Korea was 63,549 thousand wŏn, 5,945 thousand wŏn lower than demand. Throughout the colonial period, short amounts were supplemented by imports mainly from Japan. See Pak Sŏp, Han’guk kŭndaes u nongŏp pyŏndong: nongmin kyŏngyŏng u sŏngjang kwa nongŏp kujo u pyŏndong [Agricultural Change in Modern Korea: Development of Management by Peasants and the Change of Agricultural Structure] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1997), 126-129.

Kyŏngsŏng was one of the major vegetable consumption areas in Korea. In 1937, 700 thousand people in of the city consumed 21.68 million kwan of vegetables, worth 3,470 thousand won, provided from six counties surrounding the city and from abroad. For kimchi making only, 10 million kwan of napa cabbage and daikon, 0.1 million kwan of water celery, 4.09 million kwan of pepper were estimated in 1942. “Kimjangyŏng soch’ae kigūn” [Shortage of Vegetables for Winter-time Kimchi], Maeil sinbo Nov. 18, 1942.

\textsuperscript{26} For instance, production of daikon in specific was at least not in rise, from 162 million in 1938 to 121 million kwan in 1939, 157 million in 1940, 152 million in 1941, and 137 million in 1942. Cited from Song Kyujin et al. eds., Tongye ro pon han’guk kŭnhyŏndaesa [Modern and Contemporary Korean History Through Statistics] (Seoul: Ayŏn ch’ulp’anbu, 2003), 117. More research on the market share of Chinese vegetable growers is needed, but there was a strong concern in wartime Korea about vegetable shortage due to the return of Chinese farmers to China. For instance, see “Soch’ae chagŭp u kŭmmu” [Urgent Task of Vegetable Self-Sufficiency], Maeil sinbo Dec. 28, 1937.
system of vegetable cultivation for the city.”27 Emphasizing this historical lesson on the significance of self-sufficiency, Sanō urged urbanites to become productive consumers: to break away from passive reliance on rationing and to take part in active production.28

Class mattered, as gardening discourse identified bourgeois gardens in the city as a crucial land of (re)discovery for food production. In 1920s and 1930s Japan and Korea, the concept of so-called “cultural life” (*munhwa saenghwal*) and the “culture house” (*munhwa chut’aek*) crystalized the ideal lifestyle for the urban bourgeois class family, a lifestyle touted as cosmopolitan, modern, rational, hygienic, affluent, and convenient.29 Against the background of war, however, the gardening discourse attacked the cultural life of the urban bourgeois class for being unpatriotic—that is, Western, consumeristic, materialistic, and individualistic. Accordingly, the meaning of the gardens of the urban elite also changed from a spatial signifier of their wealth and taste into a symbol of their unproductiveness. In the 1920s and 30s, gardens often appeared in public media as an aesthetic space that satisfied bourgeois tastes. Popular magazines featured a number of reports on the houses and gardens of celebrities as aesthetic models. For instance, the September 1937 issue of the famous popular magazine, *Chogwang* (Morning Light) included six reports on the houses and gardens of Korean celebrities. Vegetables were mentioned in these reports, but the major interest in the description was the aesthetics of the beautiful and rare flora as well as the pond and rock arrangements of their landscape. As the war progressed, however, popular media came increasingly to view gardens as non-productive spaces waiting to be

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27 Sanō, *Chōsen senji katei engei yomihon*, 1.
28 Sanō, *Chōsen senji katei engei yomihon*, 1. This idea of food shortage as the major reason for the German defeat was widespread over the world as a lesson of the World War I. See Belinda J. Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
transformed into sites for food production. To leave one’s garden as “an idle, non-productive flower garden,” an editorial warned in a moralistic tone, “evinces a lack of (any) sincerity in such urgent times.”

Once discovered, idle spaces could be filled through labor with practical food crops to maximize land utility. Instead of “trees for pleasure,” a magazine article claimed, fruit trees should be planted, and then, “useful vegetables such as daikon and napa cabbage”—the two most important vegetables for kimchi, a Korean dietary staple—can occupy the land instead of flowers. Leafy and root vegetables were on top of the recommendation list for their utility as food. The action plan of the campaign recommended radish, spinach, bean, potato, sweet potato, tomato, and corn due to their low maintenance and availability of seeds. But in terms of their guideline, there was virtually no limit to their recommendations; everything and anything edible and nutritious could/should be planted. Military usage was a consideration as well; castor-oil-plants, for instance, were encouraged for their use as airplane fuel, especially in the last two years when fuel supply deteriorated due to sea blockage. Vegetables were always on the top for gardening, but small livestock, such as rabbits, chickens, and bees, were also promoted as an attractive option to fill urban domestic gardens. In particular, rabbits were widely promoted for their versatile usages. Nutritional experts like Takai Toshio in Chapter 3 recommended rabbits as a good source of protein especially for growing children. Rabbit fur was in high demand to be

30 “Konghanji ŭi iyong,” Maeil sinbo, Feb. 15, 1941.
31 “Kwŏnduŏn,” Nongmin Saengthwal, 1.
32 “Konghanji rŭl iyong haja,” Ch’unch’u, 136.
33 “P’imaja kyŏljon chungsan: aegukpan ŭi hyŏmn’yŏk kangjo” [Increasing Castor-oil Plants for the Final Battle: In Need of the Patriotic Units’ Cooperation], Maeil sinbo Apr. 20, 1944.
34 Takai Toshio, “Chŏsen jūmin no shoku ni kansuru eiyōgaku teki kansatsu” [Nutritional Scientific Observation of the Korean Diet], Jōdai shōnika zassi [Journal of Pediatrics at Keijō Imperial University] 11, no.5 (March 1940), 86.
used in winter clothing for soldiers due to its flexibility, light weight, and insulation capacity.\footnote{Kunsu chawŏn ŭi t’omop’i’} [Rabbit Fur as Military Supplies], Maeil sinbo, May 29, 1939 and “Chŏnsŭng ŭn yangt’o esŏ: t’okki nŭn chŏldaero p’eryohada” [Winning War is from Raising Rabbits: Rabbits are Absolutely Needed], Maeil sinbo, Sept. 14, 1943. Because of these multiple reasons, the GGK encouraged rural and urban residents to raise rabbits by launching a 5 year plan in 1938 with an aim to increase the number of rabbits up to one million. “Ogaenyŏn kan e paengmandu yangt’o chūngsan kyeheok” [Million Heads for Five Years, Plan for Great Increase of Rabbits], Maeil sinbo, Aug. 21, 1938. In 1943, with a focus on “military fur production and healthy meat supply to the countryside,” the state made another plan to increase rabbits from 135,920 as of 1939 up to 2.3 million heads within 5 years. Chŏsen Sōtokufu Nōrinkyoku Nōseika, Jūyō nōrin sanbutsu zōsan keikaku no gaiyō [The Outline of the Plan to Increase Major Agricultural and Forestry Products] (Keijō: Chŏsen Sōtokufu Nōrinkyoku Nōseika, 1943), 68-69.

35 In short, anything could be raised as long as it proved practical. This wartime moralistic emphasis on discovery, practicality, and productivity readily resonated with Yi Kiyŏng’s intellectual commitment to the moral value of production. As a core member of the KAPF, an association for writers of proletarian literature, Yi attempted in his early works to capture the countryside of Korea as a site of social contradictions underlying the colonial economy.\footnote{Chŏnsŭng ŭn yangt’o esŏ: t’okki nŭn chŏldaero p’eryohada} [Winning War is from Raising Rabbits: Rabbits are Absolutely Needed], Maeil sinbo, Sept. 14, 1943. Because of these multiple reasons, the GGK encouraged rural and urban residents to raise rabbits by launching a 5 year plan in 1938 with an aim to increase the number of rabbits up to one million. “Ogaenyŏn kan e paengmandu yangt’o chūngsan kyeheok” [Million Heads for Five Years, Plan for Great Increase of Rabbits], Maeil sinbo, Aug. 21, 1938. In 1943, with a focus on “military fur production and healthy meat supply to the countryside,” the state made another plan to increase rabbits from 135,920 as of 1939 up to 2.3 million heads within 5 years. Chŏsen Sōtokufu Nōrinkyoku Nōseika, Jūyō nōrin sanbutsu zōsan keikaku no gaiyō [The Outline of the Plan to Increase Major Agricultural and Forestry Products] (Keijō: Chŏsen Sōtokufu Nōrinkyoku Nōseika, 1943), 68-69.

36 In 1934 he was arrested for his participation in the KAPF. After release in 1935, however, he was able to come back as a prolific writer, publishing a number of novels such as New Land (Sin’gaeji, 1938), Mine Village (Kwangsanch’on, 1943), and Virgin Land (Ch’ŏnyŏji, 1944). Categorized as production literature (saengsan munhak), these novels extended Yi’s...
interest in the Korean countryside to other spaces such as mines as sites of production rather than class struggle.\textsuperscript{38} For the gardener, the backyard was another production site.

The contemporary agrarian vision in his intellectual circle also gave Yi a motivation to cultivate his own backyard in the city. Against the backdrop of urbanization in the 1920s and 1930s, intellectuals envisioned the countryside as a productive and alternative space for overcoming modern, capitalist, and urban problems like consumerism and moral decadence.\textsuperscript{39} Rather than just imagining such a space, intellectuals such as Yi Muyŏng physically moved to the countryside to take part in agricultural work and live the life of a peasant farmer.\textsuperscript{40} Yi Kiyŏng did not leave the city, believing that he could still be rural and productive—although he fled to Chŏrwŏn in Kangwŏn Province in the last phase of war in 1945.

Yi’s essay, “One-P’yŏng Farm” is full of his devotion to productivity. For Yi, producing food was an active way of living rather than simply relying on conservation, which was assumed to be passive. He stated, “At this time we should not overlook even a single grain of cereal, but I think, going a step further, to produce even a grain of cereal is an active solution.”\textsuperscript{41} The imperialist rhetoric of (re)discovery readily resonated with Yi’s action of turning his attention to the value of his everyday space. He discovered the potential value of a tiny space in his backyard beside the changdoktae, a place for sauce jars. He admitted how the space had been unused and, blaming his own indifference, claimed, “This land had been abandoned with the assumption that it was not suitable for farming. Even when it was considered for farming, the land was ignored

\textsuperscript{38} Cho Chin’gi, “Ilche malgi saengsan sosŏl yŏn’gu” [Study on Production Novels in the Late Colonial Period], \textit{Uri mal kŭl [Our Language and Writing]} 42 (Apr. 2008): 331-362.
\textsuperscript{40} Cho, “Ilche malgi saengsan sosŏl yŏn’gu.”
\textsuperscript{41} Yi, “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn.”
with an idea that production might be so little.” Transforming this ignored patch of land into a productive farm was challenging for Yi as he felt “the pain of labor (nogo) of the rural household (chŏn ‘ga)’ which he once knew only abstractly “from reading poetry.” Yet, laboring in his garden was not a painful duty for him but rather a fruitful moral training to become a peasant-like productive subject. In this first-person narration, his garden transforms into a space replete with vegetables through actions such as transplanting, watering, and harvesting. Through this horticultural success and moral training, he also proves his productiveness and morality as a male subject living on the urban homefront. Sharing this experience with others and exhorting them to join in his joy of urban gardening was at the center of his essay.

Cultivating the Bourgeois Male Self in the Domestic Garden

Moral demands and aspirations for a productive soldier/peasant-like male gardener dominated wartime discourse on gardening and Yi’s essay, but this does not mean that such discourse exclusively demanded the sacrifice of personal and class interests for the empire. Rather, the discourse on gardening also promoted the mundane benefits afforded by the activity for the bourgeois individual and their family. As one article succinctly proclaimed, gardening was for “living with benefits and interests.” In terms of its narrative structure, Yi’s claim about wartime urgency, appearing exclusively at the end of his piece, is rather abrupt and stands out as an anomaly. At the end of his essay, he states, “The current situation is getting serious as the Greater East Asia War (Tae-Donga chŏnjaeng) is approaching the final battle. It is the time when

43 Yi, “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn.”
44 “Chŏnsi saenghwal ŭi han chomok: hanp’yŏng wŏnye rŭl mandŭrŏ poja” [One Item of Wartime Living: Let’s Make a One-P’yŏng Farm], Maeil sinbo, Aug. 22, 1941.
citizens on the homefront should do our best to produce and save more food with our all the energy (ch’ongnyŏk).” If we remove this part, however, his essay appears to enumerate the multiple benefits of gardening for cultivating his bourgeois male self, articulated as a healthy, capable, and caring male head leading a happy domestic life.

Despite its critique of “cultural life,” wartime gardening discourse did not deny bourgeois aspirations to build a happy domestic life. Sanō Miyoshi, for instance, believed wartime gardening would move beyond the bourgeois idea of “cultural life” whose ground was “urban culture,” “rational, materialist living,” and “the world view of Britain and the USA.” Nonetheless, authors like Sanō did not deny bourgeois desires embedded in “cultural life” to form a happy family and achieve a better livelihood. Indeed, Sanō admitted that wartime gardening was “not completely different from the previous cultural life.”

The domestic garden, with the condition that the space be productive, was still conceived as an essential item for a happy bourgeois family, usually interpreted as a nuclear family consisted of a husband, a wife, and children. Male authors in gardening discourse did not hide their desires to become an ideal male head as a caring father and husband. Wartime discourse usually assigned the kitchen as a space for housewives while the garden served as a space where the two genders and their children could work harmoniously. One example can be seen in an accompanying image of a happy family consisting of a husband and a housewife working together in the garden, from an article titled “What a Pleasant Thing! Home Gardening” (Figure 45).

45 “Chŏnsi saenghwal ŭi han chomok,” Maeil sinbo, Aug. 22, 1941.
46 Sanō, Chōsen senji katei engei yomihon, 363-364.
47 Sanō, Chōsen senji katei engei yomihon, 363.
48 For idealized nuclear family images in colonial Korea, see Kim Hyegyŏng, Singminji ha kûndae kajok ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa chendŏ [The Making of Modern Family and Gender under Colonial Rule] (Seoul: Ch’angbi, 2006).
5-4). Holding a pickax high in his two hands, the husband is about to till the ground with a big smile on his face. Next to the man, the wife happily waters young seedlings. The joy of growing their own food together in their garden moves into another scene. In another picture in the same article, a husband and a wife are having a meal sitting on the floor with smiles and looking at vegetables from the garden (Figure 5-5). Although absent in these particular pictures, children appeared frequently as the crucial element in the utopic image of the family. Another newspaper article presented gardening as a pleasant family leisure activity with a father who “does not have much time to see” (mannel sae to ŏptŭn) his family on weekdays, but can work alongside his son and daughter and dine together after work. For Yi Kiyŏng, gardening was also a family activity through which this male intellectual became an attentive male head working together with his wife to rear their children. When he first decided to raise chickens in his backyard, he consulted his wife. As a caring father, Yi supervised his children in planting flowers in the corner of the garden.

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49 Watanabe Yoshimi, “Tanoshiki monoyō katei engei” [What a Pleasant Thing! Home Gardening], Kokumin sŏryoku 4, no. 5 (May 1942), 33.
50 Watanabe, “Tanoshiki monoyō katei engei,” 36.
51 “Chŏnsi ha ŭi konghyuil: ilga ch’ongdongwŏn kajŏng nongwŏn sonjil” [Holidays in Wartime: Total Mobilization of the Household for Home Farm], Maeil sinbo Apr. 23, 1945.
Apart from becoming a caring husband and father in a happy family, male voices in gardening discourse disclosed their desire to train a strong physical body and healthy mind through gardening. As a role model, Minami in Figure 5-1 showed off his healthy physique in front of the GGK staff. Yi Yunjae, an eminent linguist, introduced his physical labor for gardening as part of his secret to maintaining good health.\(^2\) In a similar way, Sanō Miyoshi proclaimed the health benefits of the fresh air and sunshine that would come with tending to vegetables early in the morning.\(^3\) In particular, the domestic garden was portrayed as an environmental haven for bourgeois males and families in the midst of the unruly bustle of the city. The economy of colonial rule transformed Kyŏngsŏng into a major city, with the population reaching one million in early 1940s.\(^4\) Not surprisingly, rapid expansion caused urban problems in Kyŏngsŏng, ranging from air pollution to poor transportation, insufficient sewage system, unhygienic foods, and slum districts. In an effort to recreate the concept of the Garden City made famous by Ebenezer Howard in Britain, state officials and developers of suburban Kyŏngsŏng in the 1930s appealed to urban consumers that housing complexes in the border of Seoul would be an environmental haven free from urban problems yet still afforded urban conveniences.\(^5\) If such a proposal attracted urbanites to move from the city center to the suburb for environmental

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\(^2\) Yi Yunjae, “Siguk kwa na ŭi kŏn’gangbŏp” [The Current Situation and My Art of Health], Maeil sinbo, August 22, 1941.

\(^3\) Sanō, Chōsen senji katei engei yomihon, 363.


\(^5\) See Chapter 6 of Yŏm, Sŏul ŭi kiwŏn kyŏngsŏng ŭi t’ansaeng.
benefits, gardening discourse sought to convince urban residents that, even in the midst of the city, domestic gardens could provide a clean and healthy retreat. In the aforementioned newspaper article recommending gardening as a weekend family activity, the author also contrasts the satisfaction of gardening at home with the “unpleasant feeling” caused by jam-packed trams on the way to the suburbs for fresh air. Instead, the author insists that gardening at home would provide a perfect alternative without such excesses of modern capitalist development. In Figure 5-5, the billows of smoke from the chimney in the background also suggest that the garden before the wall constitutes an environmentally clean domestic space even inside the cityscape. The text accompanying the picture more explicitly praises the environmental value of domestic gardens, describing vegetables grown in the garden as “fresh,” “safe,” and even aesthetically “cute.” When Yi Kiyŏng claimed that “people isolated from nature living in the middle of the big city could get lots of psychological comfort from a simple garden,” his garden was also an environmental space for him in which he could live with nature amid a hectic city life. Notably, his attempts to re-plant balloon flowers gathered from Mountain Pukhan near Seoul during one of his family outings implied a transplanting of nature from the outside into the domestic space.

Yet for the capable male head, chief among the benefits of gardening was an economic return and an attendant contribution to the family's financial stability. When the concept of self-sufficiency became prevalent during the war years, its meaning applied not only to the macro-levels of the empire, Korea, or even the city, but also to the micro-level of the individual household. “Expecting some economic benefits,” a magazine article advised readers to “raise the spirit of self-sufficiency … and not to forget that many drops make a shower [t’ikkūl i ssayŏsŏ

56 Yi, “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn.”
t’aesan].” For Yi, too, the economic benefit of self-sufficiency for the individual was an important motivation. Recollecting his 1942 harvest, Yi was pleased that the total market value of the vegetables that he grew in 1942 was at least ten won. The money did not amount to much as Yi admitted, saying, “To be sure, ten won is not a big (sum of) money [(this equaled) one eighth of the first month’s salary of a low-rank officer at the GGK in 1943].” Nevertheless, Yi considered the sum as extra income, stating, “The land had been idle before… Isn’t it great that ten won a year is earned as extra income?” By the time Yi wrote his essay in July 1943, he had already harvested lettuce and crown daisy several times. “Had I purchased it in the market,” he boasted, “the value of these vegetables would be over one won at least.”

It is noteworthy here that, despite his rhetoric of self-sufficiency free from the market, his practice of gardening for harvest was still monetized and commodified in accordance to the market value of vegetables. Once the value of his labor and land was tabulated by its market value, Yi filled the role of a capitalist subject poised to maximize the value of the land—although he frequently critiqued self-interest driven by the logic of the capitalist economy in his wartime writings.

Practical manuals written by experts in agriculture and horticulture provided detailed tips for becoming a successful gardener who could maximize the land’s utilities. If we bracket out bellicose expressions such as gardening as a military action, the contents of these manuals do not differ greatly from peacetime manuals in their insistence on objective, scientific, and practical knowledge for successful gardening. For experts, urban gardening was a “science” and “technology” that needed “learning” and the “secret know-how” (pigyŏl), including what to plant, the optimum time for planting and harvesting, and how to make homemade fertilizers. All

57 “Kwŏnduŏn,” Nongmin Saenghwal, 1.
58 Yi, “Il’yp’yŏng nongwŏn.”
59 “Chŏnsi saenghwal ŭi han chomok,” Maeil sinbo, Aug. 22, 1941.
these seemingly practical and apolitical tips were indeed concerned with creating a capable bourgeois (male) subject who could maximize profits for his family with “universal” modern values such as calculation, science, diligence, independence, frugality, and creativity.

The ability to calculate were the foremost fundamental virtues for the subject. Successful gardening began with calculating the required amount for consumption. For instance, Sanō Miyoshi provided a standard number, about 18 kwan of vegetables per each person in the household. The other crucial virtue, experts advised, was to learn how to manage space and time scientifically. First, scientific management of space began with decisions on what to plant in “the right land” (chōkchi) in order to maximize food production. Providing advice on how to choose the perfect plant according to the character of land, gardening manuals advised urban gardeners to study the specific condition of each plot for land utility maximization. Secondly, manuals stressed scientific time management for profit maximization. Urban gardeners, manuals exhorted, should know the “right timing” (chōkki)—when to plant, when to transplant, and when to harvest—and, eventually, become the master of time management (Figure 5-6 to 9).

61 Sanō, Chōsen senji Katei engei yomihon, 15. See a similar calculation in Takahashi, Katei engei, 152-161.
62 Sanō, Chōsen senji Katei engei yomihon, 19.
63 See “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn kwa chaebae ŭi pigyŏl,” Maeil sinbo, Mar. 16, 1945, Takahashi, Katei engei, 21-25, and “Jitsuyōtekina kūhako engei” [Practical Box Gardening], Kokumin sŏryoku 3, no. 4 (April 1941).
64 Sanō, Chōsen senji Katei engei yomihon, 19.
65 One manual, for instance, divided a year into four parts. In the first period from mid-March daikon, spinach, lettuce, and crown daisy were advised to plant. In the second period, from mid-April, carrot, cucumber, and zucchini were recommended. In the third period, from mid-May, taro, peanut, corn, and sweet potato would be planted. Finally, napa cabbage and daikon, green onion for kimchi would be planted between mid-July and mid-August. See “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn kwa chaebae ŭi pigyŏl,” Maeil sinbo, Mar. 16, 1945. Another manual added one more consideration factor: regional differences inside the Korean peninsula. Dividing Korea into three areas, middle, north, and south, Takahashi provided different plans for crop rotation. Takahashi, Katei engei, 96-100.

Figure 5-6 from Kim Hyŏngsuk, “Kajŏng ch’aeso wŏnye (sam-wŏl)” [Home Vegetable Gardening (March)], Nongmin saenghwal 13, no. 3 (Mar. 1941), 17. Figures 5-7 & 8 from “Kuch'i ri'yŏ yasaen sekkeizū” [Plan for the Vegetable Garden in Utilization of Vacant Land], Kokumin sŏryoku 4, no. 5 (May 1942), 37 & 38. Figure 5-9 from Sanō, Chōsen senji Katei engei yomihon, 27.
(Figure 5-8)
Apart from calculating and studying capacities, gardening manuals promoted other values required for ideal bourgeois subjects such as independence, self-reliance, diligence, and frugality. Making fertilizer was the best example of such virtues. Gardeners making their own fertilizers represented independent subjects who would not rely on outside help but instead manage by themselves by using the materials around them. Manuals provided information on different kinds of self-made fertilizer and how to make them using materials easily accessible around the yard. Almost all things, from the excrement of chickens to wood ashes and rice water after washing,
could be made into fertilizer. In the view of these manuals, ideal subjects should pay close attention to all the materials of their surroundings and use all resources frugally and creatively without any waste.

While it is not clear whether Yi actually read any of the many manuals on urban gardening, his narrative nonetheless aligned with the ideal urban gardener presented by experts. He calculated his costs and benefits. He made plans and created ideas. He studied how to use his land most effectively with consideration given to soil quality, sunlight, and size. He also managed time, adopting crop rotation and watering plants every day. Overcoming difficulties through trial and error, he enjoyed the utility of vegetables and converted it into monetary value. Thanks to these economic benefits and other non-economic values alike, Yi perceived gardening as a perfect activity to build a domestic space in which the male gardener would relish a healthy, wealthy, clean, and harmonized life.

The Harmonious Connection between the Private Garden and the Whole

The garden in Figure 5-5 is encircled by a wall, implying that the private space is secure from external threats. But this does not mean that the bourgeois domestic space in gardening discourse was entirely secluded from the outside world. What Yi discovered from gardening was that his domestic space could co-exist harmoniously with the outside world. In admitting that the money derived from his garden might not have been enough in its own right, he gestured to the concept of the totality as a collective sum of individuals. He calculated:

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Sanō, Chōsen senji katei engei yomihon, 83-85.
It is only ten wŏn for a household, but if one hundred households, then one thousand wŏn; if one thousand households, then ten thousand wŏn; if ten thousand households, then one hundred thousand wŏn. If all the households in Korea make a one-p’yŏng farm and make ten wŏn income per household, then isn’t it (the case) that a really considerable number will be generated?

In this chain of logic, the small value produced in each tiny garden would accrue and accrete to produce a great value, in that the tiny space of his garden was connected to the colony of Korea and implicitly, the empire. The space in a fenced house could be small, but the sum of all the plots was not at all insignificant for Yi.

This fantasy of accumulation and connection recurs in many articles on the one-p’yŏng farm campaign with more concrete statistics. The aforementioned article, titled “What a Pleasant Thing! Home Gardening,” provides an effective illustration of this. The article expresses a rosy outlook, counting if the total 1,268,421 urban households in Korea grew vegetables in one p’yŏng land, 1,268,421 p’yŏng of new land, that is, 150 thousand p’yŏng land alone in Seoul, would be mobilized as “an incomparable vegetable farm in the world.” Apart from the figures, the article presented the image of a natural landscape alongside monumental buildings to stress the importance of the tiny space of the backyard in food production. If four million daikons were collected and piled up, the article exclaimed, it would look like “a mountain of daikon” with a height equal to the Great South Gate in Seoul, a potent symbol of the city and Korea at large.

In such descriptions, small, individual pieces of land were imagined in the singular, as one massively connected terrain. Yet, one issue remained. It was not easy for “individuals” (wareware) to get the sense of this connection to the wider network of the empire, the article explains. As a result, the article warns, unease could arise: “The sea of daikon is so fearful and

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67 Watanabe, “Tanoshiki monoyō katei engei.”
68 Watanabe, “Tanoshiki monoyō katei engei,” 35.
69 Watanabe, “Tanoshiki monoyō katei engei,” 34.
vast that it cannot be imagined how far it stretches.” The way for individuals to overcome this fear, the article suggests, is to recognize the connection of the private land to the total public space, and in doing so, to take on a transcendent position beyond the small scope of the individual. Once standing in that position, the article implies, the unfathomable expanse of the sea would arouse the feeling of joy and happiness to overcome the emotion of fear by being part of the totality. The connection between individuals and the whole is completed as a happy ending as the article describes, “If you stand and look out to the sea, how pleasant will it be?” With this description, the article depicts an image of a contented male gardener who stands proudly before a sea of daikons, holding a pickax and grinning with satisfaction (Figure 5-10).

(Figure 5-10)

But this connection of individual gardens to the whole as a joyful union did not remain only in the realm of images or rhetoric. As a mediator between the individual and the whole, Patriot Units (aegukpan), which brought together about ten households as a single unit, played a

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70 Watanabe, “Tanoshiki monoyō katei engei,” 36.
71 Watanabe, “Tanoshiki monoyō katei engei,” 36.
72 Watanabe, “Tanoshiki monoyō katei engei,” 33.
crucial role in the gardening movement. With its network of about 380,000 individual units and a total of 5.9 million members as of December 1940,73 this grass-roots organization intervened in the everyday life of civilians through various activities such as urging Shinto worship, promoting Japanese language, encouraging wartime lifestyle, checking the number of family members, and distributing rationed food.74 Encouraging gardening was one of its tasks. Members of each unit visited every household in their district to discover idle land.75 The members worked to distribute seeds and seedlings that were not easy to get in the wartime climate.76 In May 1943, for instance, units in Seoul prepared 10,000 seedlings of eggplants and tomatoes each. In addition, communal ownership and production through the units was encouraged as a way of maximizing productivity. The units bought farming tools, which were also in short supply, and shared them among neighbors.77 Fertilizer and pesticide could also be bought collectively.78 Beyond materials, the units shared practical farming know-how.79 The members worked communally, especially in public land.80 They then sold what they cultivated together, for

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73 Chōsen Sōtokufu, Hantō no kokumin sōryoku undō [Total National Mobilization Movement in the Korean Peninsula] (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1941), 89.
75 “Konghanji iyong: Ilp’yŏng wŏn’ye sihaeng” [Idle Land Utilization: Practice of One-P’yŏng Gardening], Maeil sinbo, August 6, 1941 and “Konghanji iyong āl ch’ŏljŏ soch’ae chaebae undong chŏn’gae: Ch’ongnyŏk ŭnmaeng esŏ kaktŏ ŭnmaeng e tongch’ŏp” [Complete Utilization of Idle Land, Development of Vegetable Production Movement: The League of Total Mobilization Sends a Notification to the Branches in Provinces], Maeil sinbo, April 28, 1941.
77 “Konghanji rŭl iyong haja,” Ch’umch’u, 136.
78 “Chŏnsi saenghwal ūi han chomok,” Maeil sinbo, Aug. 22, 1941 and Sanŏ, Chōsen senji katei engei yomihon, 114.
79 Sanŏ, Chōsen senji katei engei yomihon, 362.
80 “Sogaehan kongji e ch’aewŏn, Aegukpan yŏrhan ūi ch’ongjin’gun” [Vegetable Garden in Evacuated Land, March of The Patriotic Units], Maeil sinbo, June 8, 1945.
instance, visiting every neighborhood with handcarts and scales. Gardenning in the domestic garden was as communal as it was private.

There is no specific mention about whether Yi’s gardening was a collaborative project with his neighbors. For Yi, the connection between his garden and the public was less material than symbolic; he proclaimed that gardening in his private garden would transform him into a capable public figure that could lead a new era with a new energy and spirit. When he saw vegetables persist and grow inch by inch in defiance of the scorching summer days, he came to appreciate the “frightened struggle of life.” He claimed admiringly: “They [Vegetables] really have a fresh capacity for life. The full spirit of energetic life! It arouses an exciting feeling as if facing a healthy youth.” This vitality provided middle-aged Yi with the momentum not only to feel young and energetic but also to turn his vision of building a perfect private domesticity into a dream of building a grandiose world. This vital energy of life, he expected, would eventually become the source of creativity necessary to produce “a new era in this Greater East Asia War.” He concluded his essay confidently, “Even in trivial things, we have to improve our labor and demonstrate outstanding creativity. Only in doing so we can discover healthy living and, in turn, create a new culture.” Like his fictional male protagonists in production novels, Yi himself in his narrative was reborn into an ideal public figure replete with vitality and creativity for a new future. In every aspect, therefore, his gardening meant for him a great story of success.

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Tensions, Contradictions, and Anxieties in Harmony

What Yi intended to build was a utopian space in which multiple aspirations might be harmonized without any conflicts. Yet, this was not the case. Behind the rhetoric of harmony lay tensions, contradictions, and anxieties that threatened Yi’s utopian vision. Above all, it is unclear how many people actually joined the gardening movement, how much idle land was converted into farms, and ultimately, how urban gardening contributed to resolving the food problem during the war years. On the level of newspaper description, the act of discovering empty land and growing food spread out across the Korean peninsula until 1945. Encouraged by competitions, exhibitions, essays, cartoons, and poems, a broad spectrum of social groups—provincial governors, policemen, soldiers, landlords, young men and housewives—grew food in their own backyards as well as in public spaces. Newspapers and magazines delivered many desirable testimonies regarding imperial citizens who “voluntarily” donated profits from their gardens to the state. On the contrary, another newspaper article voiced a moral condemnation of pilfering vegetables as opposed to “the way of imperial

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83 “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn p’ump’yŏnghoe” [One-P’yŏng Farm Fair], Maeil sinbo, Nov. 14, 1941.
84 “Hakkyo konghanji iyong kongjinhoe” [School Idle Land Utilization Exhibition], Maeil sinbo, May 14, 1944.
85 Yi Kiyŏng, “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn.”
88 “Ilp’yŏng nongwŏn e tobaeg i subŏm: P’yŏngbuk edo konghanji iyong undong chŏn’gae” [Governor Takes the Lead in One-P’yŏng Farm Movement: The Idle Land Use Movement is in Development in P’yŏngbuk], Maeil sinbo, Mar. 21, 1941.
89 “Konghanji iyong e kyŏngch’al i subŏm” [Police Takes the Lead in Using Idle Land], Maeil sinbo, Apr. 23, 1944.
90 “Ssal ūl t’anhwan kwa kach‘i chŏryak, kundae sŏdo ilp’yŏng nongwŏn” [Saving Rice like a Bullet, One-P’yŏng Farm in the Army], Maeil sinbo, June 13, 1943.
91 “Konghanji iyong e Kaep’ung chijudŭl ūl kyŏngnyŏ” [Encourage Landlords in Kaep’ung for Utilizing Idle Land], Maeil sinbo, May 8, 1943.
92 “Ch’ŏngnyŏndae ka soch’ae jŭngsan: punae ch’ilssip p’al gae so p’al man myŏng i tongwŏn” [Youth Group Increases Vegetable Production: 80 Thousand from 78 Units in Seoul Are Mobilized], Maeil sinbo, May 14, 1943.
93 “Konghanji iyong e puindŭl ch’onggwŏlgī” [Housewives Hold Rally for Idle Land Use], Maeil sinbo, July 12, 1944.
94 “Kūkanchi tagayashite kenkin” [Donation by Cultivating Idle Land], Kokumin sŏryoku 3, no. 12 (December 1941).
To be sure, the former cases overwhelmed the latter in the public media. However, minor delinquent behaviors appeared sporadically in the media, hinting that the production of ideal wartime subjectivity was not as smooth a project as Yi suggested. Moreover, only a small amount of fragmented and sometimes contradictory data provides information about the rather disappointing sizes of idle lands and yields. One ideal scenario suggests that if all 1.2 million urban households, one fourth of the households in Korea, joined food production, only 6.4 percent of total vegetable production could be produced through gardening.

Yi’s essay reveals a wartime reality in which material shortages made gardening a difficult way to gain benefits. In fact, his original plan in 1943 was not to grow vegetables but to raise chickens instead. However, Yi could not get the mesh wire for the coop. During the war, metal was in short supply to the degree that the GGK was eager to mobilize even household utensils such as spoons, chopsticks, and bowls. Labor was also in short supply in the expanded war economy. Even though Yi could have obtained the wires, he could not find a person to build the coop for him, while he lacked the skill to do so himself. He worried that if his construction was not strong enough, a cat would steal his chickens. After the setback of his plan

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95 “Hyuhanji iyong ūi soch’a chōlch’wi malla” [Don’t Steal Vegetables from Idle Land Use], Maeil sinbo, July 31, 1943.

96 In 1940, about 390 million kwan (1 kwan = 3.75 kg) of vegetables were produced in 175,734 chōngbo (527,352,000 p’yŏng) land in Korea. This means 0.74 kwan of vegetable production per one p’yŏng on average. Let’s assume optimistically, as wartime discourse repeatedly claimed, that all the urban households participated in gardening. If all the urban households in Korea, about 1.2 million, produced one kwan of vegetables per p’yŏng in their 20 p’yŏng gardens, the total amount would have been 24 million kwan (1.8 million ton). This amount accounted for 6.4 percent of the 1941 total production, 378 million kwan (1.42 million ton). The data are from Chosen Ginkō Chōsabu [Bank of Korea Research Department] ed., Chosen nogyŏ tāikei zuhyŏ [Statistics Diagrams on Korean Agriculture] (Keijō: Chosen Ginkō Chōsabu, 1944), 55 and “Soch’a chungsan e taebakch’a: tosi kūn’gyo e yukch’ŏn chōngbo hwakchang, och’ŏn-sambaek-man kwan chungsan kyehoe” [Spurs the Increase of Vegetable Production: Plan to Expand Six Thousand chōngbo in Suburbs and Increase 378 Million Kwan], Maeil sinbo, Feb. 7, 1943.


for chickens, Yi moved to his plan B: growing vegetables. He chose kidney beans as the best option to fill the land, but had to give up his plan due to the difficulty of obtaining kidney bean seeds. Yi was not the only one who went through such trial and error. Sawada Tatsuo from Kyŏngsŏng Agricultural School lamented, “urban residents are not successful (pyŏlban chami [chaemi] rŭl mot pogo itta).”\(^99\) Similarly, Sanō Miyoshi lamented that “We can hear many sighs from many places that home gardening is difficult.”\(^100\) Gardening was never easy as promised.

Yi’s garden was asymmetrical in terms of gender. Despite recurrent images of a happy family of husband and wife working together, gardening in wartime discourse did not imply an equal division of labor between genders. Rather, gardening discourse reveals a deeply patriarchal view of an ideal family where the male head plays a leading role. In Yi’s gardening, he discussed raising chickens with his wife, but this was the only moment when she appeared in the essay. Yi narrated himself as the only gardener. Yi was not the only one who imagined an asymmetrical gender role in gardening. A photo captures this disparity dramatically. The only male in Figure 5-11 supervises female gardeners, standing at a distance from them with his hands on his waist.\(^101\) Fictional cases also disproportionally emphasized male roles in gardening over women. In Figure 5-8, the wife plays a supporting role of watering sprouts while her husband performs a major role digging with a hoe. All these male-centered views of the limited role of women belie the wide-scale participation of women in wartime gardening, and especially the fact that 70 percent of the roughly 10,000 Patriotic Units heads in Seoul were women.\(^102\) Indeed, a photo

\(^100\) Sanô, Chôsen senji katei engei yomihon, 1.
\(^101\) “Sogaehan kongji e ch’aewŏn, Aegukpan yŏrhan ŭi ch’ongjin’gun,” Maeil sinbo, June 8, 1945.
\(^102\) Yi, “Chŏnsiha aegukpan chojik kwa tosi ŭi ilssang t’ongje,” 873-4.
captures a group of women from the Units visiting their neighborhood to sell what they cultivated (Figure 5-12).\textsuperscript{103}

As the last chapter argued, ideal female gender roles in domestic space were not simply proscribed by the state or males but negotiated and countered by women. Unfortunately, it is not easy to find female voices in gardening discourse, let alone female confrontation. The only one female author that I found was a Japanese named Shibata Chidako, who wrote a poem on gardening:

\begin{quote}
For children, this year too  
Morning glory and sunflower sown, the friends of summer  
Red poppies to please (\textit{tanoshikusuru}) my husband in the morning  
Its seeds, soon too, are in need of preparation.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
This small garden less than one \textit{p’yŏng}  
Given to my family  
Hundreds and thousands of  
\textit{Joyful (Yorokobi) flowers}\textsuperscript{104}
\end{quote}

In the poem, she presents herself as the manager of her garden, unlike other male-dominant accounts. Yet, not unlike other male authors, she also envisages her gardening as an activity of a part with a sphere of harmonized domesticity. On the contrary, the famous male painter No Suhyŏn’s cartoon about gardening hints at the gendered tensions over how to manage the

\textsuperscript{103}“Konghanji iyong undong e sibŏm,” \textit{Maeil sinbo}, Aug. 4, 1941.  
\textsuperscript{104}Shibata, “Hitotsubo nŏen,” 47.
domestic space with regard to gardening. At first glance, this cartoon just illustrates another male discourse that does not give any agency to women. In the cartoon, it is always the “active” male head who makes plans and ideas while his wife remains passive, only expressing her reluctance toward her husband’s ideas with a sigh, “well.” “She always says, ‘well,’ whenever I make ideas,” the husband says to himself, blaming his wife for “not yet knowing it [we can live an artful, interesting, and frugal life if we ponder over it]” (Figure 5-13). This tension between the husband and the wife is itself worthy of attention as a sign that domesticity might have not been as simple and harmonious as otherwise presented.

(Figure 5-11)  (Figure 5-12)

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To be sure, all of the tensions and difficulties expressed in wartime gardening discourse play a narrative role in how they resolve at the end. In Yi’s narrative, all material difficulties are destined to be overcome by his unceasing efforts. Horticulture experts also used their concerns about gardening difficulties as a rhetorical tool to emphasize their expertise. In No’s cartoon, the tension between the husband and the wife also resolves when, after much trial and error, the husband makes a large profit in producing green onions, cows, eggs, and especially rabbits, whom the husband succeeds in breeding from a pair into a large farm with 3,000 new rabbits born daily. The wife finally affirms his efforts by accepting her gender role in their domestic space, that is, serving a drinking table—a feminine role of serving food, and giving laughter. All the cases are, without exception, happy endings.

One rare exception is Yi T’aejun’s autobiographical short story, *A Tale of Rabbits*. Rather than provide a closed happy ending, the story depicts a bourgeois male intellectual full of anxieties about articulating his masculine subjectivity and consecrating an ideal domestic life. After losing his job as an editor in a newspaper company, Hyŏn, the male protagonist writer, downsizes his domestic space to a newly developed peri-urban town in Seoul. Raising rabbits in his backyard is his attempt to rebuild his public self in his private domesticity. The income from rabbits is a material source not only for feeding his family members but also for achieving his dream of writing a novel and establishing public status as a writer. But this dual dream ends up a complete failure due to wartime economic constrains. Because of the rising price of rabbit fodder in the wartime economy, the protagonist loses almost all his retirement salary. Yet, most seriously, the protagonist cannot cultivate the masculine subjectivity required for both private

and public space. Unlike the determined and masculine Yi Kiyŏng, Yi T’aegun’s protagonist is indecisive and hesitant, particularly in his relationship with his wife. In this story, it is always Hyŏn’s wife who urges him to take action. It is she who persuades Hyŏn to begin raising rabbits, and it is also she who manages his failure. When Hyŏn and his wife decide to kill their rabbits to prevent the loss of more money, the feeble and sentimental protagonist cannot even take the action of spending just a few days studying how to kill rabbits. Instead, it is Hyŏn’s pregnant wife who kills the rabbits, and afterward asks Hyŏn to bring water to clean her bloody hands. Indeed, such an ending can be read as moral advice to intellectuals on how to become more determined and active by learning from this failure. But this story might also be read as a fundamental critique of gardening discourse, since it presents an unsettling domestic space in which the social aspirations of increasing food production and building an ideal masculine self and domesticity are left unrealized.

Conclusion

In her research on short stories set in per-urban houses in late colonial Korea, including the stories of Yi T’aegun, Janet Poole points out that urban domestic space in fiction was not a harmonized space where male writers’ bourgeois fantasies would be realized, but rather an unsettling space full of anxieties, dilemmas, and tensions caused by the capitalist economy of an expanding empire.107 The domestic garden was part of the disquiet space. Gardening discourse on Korea’s homefront envisioned a utopian world free from any conflict among different social aspirations. In particular, various experts claimed that imperial desires to maximize food

production and form imperial subjects could coexist harmoniously with bourgeois desires to
cultivate masculine selfhood and domesticity in the urban domestic garden. Even Yi Kiyŏng, the
former Marxist who had earlier stressed class struggle in rural Korea, imagined his urban
domestic garden as a utopian space where he could cultivate self, family, history, and a new era
in the time of “the Greater East Asia War.” His garden was a place where everything was in
accord without any social and cultural conflicts between public/private, male/female, urban/rural,
and production/leisure. Yet, by reading against the grain, one finds that the garden was not a
space of harmony but instead a realm of disquiet.

Indeed, despite Yi’s announcement of his success in 1943, Yi’s dream of building a new
subject, culture, life, and history during “the Greater East Asia War” halted as the empire
collapsed around him in the summer of 1945. But his efforts in building them continued, albeit
with a slightly different vision. Yi moved to the north of the Korean peninsula. There he became
one of the most influential public figures in developing socialist literature in the DPRK, with
novels such as Land (Ttang, 1948-9) and his epic trilogy on modern Korean history, The Tumen
River (Tuman’gang, 1952-1961). Beyond the bounds of literature, he held various public
positions in the state and the party, and after his death in 1984, he received the utmost honor in
the DPRK of being buried in the National Patriots Cemetery (Aeguk yŏlssarŭng). It is unknown
whether he grew vegetables again in his backyard in the DPRK. If he did, one can only wonder
what gardening meant to him and to other urbanities in relation to the project of building
socialism.
Conclusion

This study has presented five discrete case studies, which, as an aggregate form a complete picture of the wartime food politics on the Korean homefront. The entire picture narrated the varied ways in which the total war regime penetrated the everyday lives of Koreans under the pretense of improving productivity and efficiency in all things food-related. The state was only a part of the larger picture. The total war regime was, in fact, an amalgam of various social players including experts and intellectuals examined in this study. They seldom referred to ideas and works beyond their own disciplines, and in their respective fields, they each had dreams of their own. Yet, all their dreams formed a singular vision for improvement. Although the wartime years of the Japanese empire have been frequently interpreted as an aberration from modern history, the wartime food politics was part of a global history of the modern world—a history of actors who each in their own way strove for improvements in their quest for modernity. The targets for improvement were diverse: for some, the targets were decidedly concrete as in agriculture, nutrition, kitchens, and gardens but for others, they were abstract values such as ideal gendered subjectivities. Despite their different ideals and methods, a motley crew of distinguished experts and impassioned intellectuals involved in food politics came to resemble each other in their shared will for improvement. The first case study told the story of a Korean agronomist who endeavored to reform what he saw as a backward feudal landlord system into a more productive collective farming system for he firmly held the belief that it would improve the living conditions of rural Koreans and, ultimately, advance the Korean nation. In the second case, we saw how three Korean intellectuals approached slash-and-burn farmers with equal zeal and ambition to benefit the lives of this particular group of marginalized rural population through
modernist representations—be it social scientific or literary in form. The third case featured Japanese nutrition experts who borrowed the language of science to assess the dietary habits of Koreans, all in the hopes of formulating a scientific method for an efficient food management and better diet. In the fourth case study, we observed aspirations of middle-class elite women and their attempts to articulate a bourgeois identity as scientific housewives in their kitchens. And finally, the last case examined the ways in which a writer’s agrarian social vision and his bourgeois desires for private property and subjectivity came to fruition in the domestic garden. Despite standing at different junctures with their own agendas and aspirations, all the experts and intellectuals in each case study found a common ground in the idea of improvement.

The dilemma for many social players involved in food politics was that their drive for betterment was hardly different from the colonial state’s own ambitions to enhance productivity and efficiency of Koreans for the war. Some of the players like In Chŏngsik and Takai Toshio explicitly advocated the wartime state, believing the state as the most efficient social engineering entity to implement change and lift Koreans out of poverty. Others were more hostile to the violence of the state. While writers like Kim Saryang challenged with their pen, others demonstrated their reluctance to cooperate with the colonial state by choosing to write nothing at all. There were also those who remained indifferent to politics. Many women who took pride in their new recipes seldom mentioned the on-going war or the state as motivations for their creations. Despite mentioning the state as his rationale, it was actually Yi Kiyŏng own bourgeois ambition for a happy domesticity merging with his social vision for agrarianism that sustained his gardening practice, not the wartime urgency. Notwithstanding the differences, however, their shared will for improvement readily resonated with the vision of the colonial state and their demand for enhanced productivity and efficiency of Koreans—this was the case for even those indifferent to the state. Middle-class veneration for scientific food managers was very much in
line with the wartime state’s moral encouragement to become efficient food consumers for the empire. Yi’s agrarian ambition to transform the city into a productive space like the countryside also emphatically reverberated with the wartime urban gardening campaigns that sought to transform urban lands and mobilize residents on the Korean homefront. If we only stress the ways in which such a diverse set of interests and desires converged with the wartime state ideology of total mobilization, the wartime food politics could be seen as totalizing, indeed.

However, if we probe deeper the five case studies betray a less totalizing picture. Fascist ideology in food politics promised a harmonious world, wherein desires of all races, regions, genders, and classes would come together and charge toward a continuous progress, and, of course, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere would be without any conflicts or negativity. But beneath the veneer of unanimity and cooperation, the competing desires of these different groups clashed, unearthing deep-seated anxieties and producing unresolved tensions. One such instance was Kim Saryang’s critique of this unyielding will for improvement. By presenting an elite medical student’s dashed hopes for lifting his fellow countrymen out of poverty, Kim posed the fundamental question of whether the government should, in fact, intervene in the lives of the marginalized population—no matter how genuine their aims may be. A similar conundrum troubled middle-class women who aspired to become scientific and independent housewives free from interference of other female subjects like mothers-in-laws and housemaids. The wartime ideology promised the possibility of an independent female subjectivity, yet the bourgeois desires for autonomy coincided with anxieties of losing a comfortable life that had long been maintained by housemaids from the lower class. As for their male counterpart, if Yi Kiyŏng’s urban gardening discourse was built on the image of a harmonized bourgeois domestic space led by an ideal masculine figure, then Yi T’aejun’s vision of domesticity featured only an emasculated family head struggling with tensions and contradictions of the time. No matter how
small the fractures or inaudible their dissonance, all these cases demonstrate that wartime food politics was never as monolithic and totalizing as it may have seemed from afar.

Indeed, the Japanese empire collapsed on August 15, 1945. From the outset, the historical imagination in postcolonial Korea has shaped the meaning of this date, August 15, more commonly referred to as p’al il o, as a day of national recovery, or simply put, a new beginning for the nation. As part of the postcolonial desire to start anew, Korean historians have made efforts to overcome the pervading colonial historical perspective, which had consistently claimed that Koreans inherently lacked the independent spirit and the capacity for self-improvement, let alone modernize their country into a developed one.¹ To counter this longstanding view, scholars in postliberation Korea combed through the historical record to mine for any signs of internal capacity that pointed to modernization, and ultimately claimed to have found the so-called “capitalist sprouts” (chabonchu’i maenga) in the late Chosŏn dynasty.² By the same token, they interpreted the 35 years of Japanese rule as putting an abrupt halt to the slow yet steady progress of Koreans toward their own modernization and, in turn, exploited the population for the sake of the empire. Especially, the darkest period of late colonial rule under total mobilization was framed as the closest Korean nation had come to the point of extinction. From the perspective of postcolonial history, then, the historical task for liberated Koreans was to bring Korea back onto the linear path of development after having been temporarily thrown off its course.

Since the late 1990s, however, scholars of Korea have made significant efforts to reconsider the interpretation of the colonial period as a time of historical discontinuity. Scholars,

¹ For the overview of postcolonial history in the two Koreas, see Andre Schmid, Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 261-270.
² See, for example, the Kim Yongsŏp’s pioneering work. Kim Yongsŏp’s pioneering work. Kim Yongsŏp, Chosŏn hugi nongŏpsa yŏn ‘gu: nongch’ on kyŏngje sahoe pyŏndong [Research on the Agricultural History of the Late Chosŏn Period: Transformations of Rural Economy and Society]. 2 Vols. (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1970-71).
irrespective of politics, began to deconstruct the historical meaning of 1945 as a tabula rasa for the nation, a clean break from its colonial past. On the one hand, economic historians in South Korea, Japan, and the USA sought to trace origins of South Korean economic development to the colonial period, especially, during the final war years. While these historians invariably tend to interpret economic expansion as an essential component of modernity and modernization, a group of scholars influenced by postcolonial theory, on the other hand, attempted to deconstruct the positive implications of modernity. By disconnecting from the assumption that colonialism begat Korean economic prosperity, they have focused on how modern modes of power penetrated every corner of the Korean peninsula, especially, in the total war years. Though there are clear differences in methodology and subject matter, the concerted emphasis on historical continuity in recent scholarship on colonial Korea have made significant contribution toward challenging the historical narrative of rebirth ingrained in the Korean imaginary.

With respect to consumption and agriculture, we can see from the following overview that wartime rhetoric of productivity and efficiency, indeed, persisted into the postwar years. This is particularly evident when we consider the continuation of the food problem. Many historians have described the food situation in the southern part of the 38th parallel in particular as a chaotic and tumultuous in the wake of the dissolution of the Japanese empire. Despite one

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million Japanese settlers returning to the archipelagos, the food problem was exacerbated because of the unprecedented scale of repopulation that took place between September 1945 and March 1949, with more than 2.49 million of Korean returning to the southern part of the peninsula from Japan, Manchuria, and the north. The agricultural production in the south remained insufficient for the increasing Korean population. Especially, the division of the peninsula along the 38th parallel cut the supply of chemical fertilizers from the industrial complex in the north to the rice paddies in the south. Although there was no longer massive amount of rice leaving for the metropolitan market, the channel of Manchurian soybeans and millets flowing into the southern part of Korea also ceased. Rampant inflation and the black market also threatened stable food prices. The postwar food problem in this new context troubled social players in the southern part of Korea, who were still invested in a better food management system.

Not unlike historians of wartime food politics in colonial Korea, historians of postwar South Korea have also demonstrated a tendency to examine food politics mainly through the vantage point of the state. By limiting their focus to the role of the US military government and its policy, they have reduced the issue to institutional change and, at the same time, reproduced the positivist logic of efficiency. Cold war competitions in the Korean peninsula have also led to scholarships evaluating the merits of food policies of the two rival regimes to simply compare which government, the communist north or the democratic south, achieved a better food management system. According to research including that of the renowned revisionist historian

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6 Kim, “Mi-kunjōng ūi singnyang chōngch’ae kwa sobi silt’aes,” 218-219.
Bruce Cumings, the US policy was simply unprepared, inefficient, and incapable of managing the food problem. In October 1945, the US military announced its free market food policy, which aimed to abolish wartime practice of food rationing and replace the food supply with market forces. However, rice price surged in the following months, shattering the visions of the free market as a viable postwar solution to the global food problem. Consequently, the US military reverted back to food rationing in January 1946 with the establishment of Korean Living Necessities Company (Chosŏn saenghwal p’ilssup’um hoesa) whose institutional lineage traced back to the former Japanese food control institution, Korean Foodstuffs Company (Chosŏn singnyang yŏngdan; est. 1943). The control measure of the US failed to impress the Korean populace. As the military government collected more than 30 percent of rice yields in return for prices even lower than production costs, farmers resisted cooperation with the government in various ways such as hiding their grains. Urban consumers, too, expressed their dissatisfactions with insufficient food rations. But perhaps most famously, Korean society was unsettled by the violent protests that erupted in the city of Taegu in 1946, when civilians demanded sufficient food supply. In every aspect, historians have painted the food policy of the US as an unequivocal failure.

However, historical tendency to evaluate government policies in terms of its efficacy could easily expand to account for other under-examined aspects of food politics in modern Korean history. Take Singnyang yŏn’gu (Research on Foodstuffs), a quarterly magazine published in March 1948 by Korean Living Necessities Company, for example. Although most of the articles in the magazine centered on discussions of government policy, attentive reading reveals other political, social, and cultural issues underlying food politics. For instance, Ch’ae

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7 See the works in the footnote 5.
Pyŏngsŏk (1906-1999)’s 1949 article on the history of rice seeds under Japanese rule and his call for invention of more productive rice seeds alludes to pressing issues of national reconstruction in a new postcolonial world order. In 1940 when he worked for the GGK after studying agriculture at Tokyo Imperial University, Ch’ae wrote a similar article on the history of rice seeds, but narrated this history as a qualitative improvement from inferior Korean kind to a more commercially profitable one, adequate for the metropolitan market. But in his 1949 article, against the backdrop of a liberated Korea, this technocrat reframed the same contents of the 1940 article as a history of national degeneration wherein diverse Korean indigenous rice seeds were replaced by only 4 to 5 Japanese seeds to suit “the taste (kiho) of the Japanese.” Interestingly, Ch’ae invoked environmental differences between Korea and Japan as one important reason for Japanese seeds having been unsuccessful in fully realizing its yield potential. In other words, unlike indigenous types, foreign seeds were inherently vulnerable to disease and natural disasters. As such, for Ch’ae, the time was ripe for reclaiming Korean seeds. He asserted, “Since Japan is no longer our main export market, we need to invent better seeds that would thrive under local conditions; with these new and improved seeds we would increase production by preventing natural disasters and evading harmful pests.” At first glance, his insistence on replacing foreign seeds with national ones would lead one to believe a dramatic shift in Ch’ae’s views from his 1940 article to the 1949 article. Yet, for the modern expert, the ideas of improvement and productivity still dominated his thinking in postliberation Korea.

The looming issue of national reconstruction was also a task in the realm of food consumption in the postwar, liberation space. For instance, the question of determining the

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10 Ch’ae, “Mŏ ū p’umjongnon,” 17.
11 Ch’ae, “Mŏ ū p’umjongnon,” 23.
minimum amount of nutrients for efficient food consumption continued to vex Korean experts who were now working on behalf of their independent nation. In his 1948 article, Kim Chunbo (1915-2007), professor at Suwŏn Agricultural College, which later merged with the prestigious Seoul National University, referred to the findings from the 1946 Conference of the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), which proposed 2,600 calories as the minimum amount of calories for world populations. Rather than simply apply the universal number to the Korean nation, Kim insisted on finding a more accurate and specific standard for Koreans. But without sufficient scientific research to determine this figure, he had to turn to other national standards for reference. The most comparable data set, however, was prepared by the former colonizer, which indicated a minimum of 2,400 calories for the average Japanese adult male. Kim’s decision to use Japan as a reference points to a common dilemma facing any postcolonial nation—that, even after decolonization, the formerly colonized is forced to rely on the knowledge system of their former colonizer to know about themselves. As such, the Korean postcolonial nation had little choice but to rebuild its food policy from the colonial legacy of the Japanese empire.

Similar to South Korea, the food history of North Korea has been examined in terms of its efficacy in the national quest for a more productive agriculture and improved food quality. The widely reported large scale famine that struck North Korea in the 1990s may mislead people to think that the socialist regime had struggled with food crisis from the very beginning, but scholars of the early years of North Korea remind us that the north was, in fact, well ahead of its southern neighbor in terms of attaining this goal. Unlike the south, which had to reckon with the US military regime’s failed experimentation with the free market, food-rationing system was

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implemented from the outset.\(^\text{13}\) Also, the land reform in 1946 was, as historian Charles Armstrong put it, “one of the most rapid, thoroughgoing land redistribution efforts in history.”\(^\text{14}\) Not only for its speed but also for its outcome, scholars have assessed the land reform as an unequivocal success for improving the material standards of everyday life, especially in contrast to the ineffective land reform efforts in the south.\(^\text{15}\) From the ruins of the Korean War, North Korea accelerated agricultural collectivization as a strategy to increase or, at the very least, maintain the level of agricultural productivity, while relocating the rural population to the city for industrialization.\(^\text{16}\) The official statistics boasted its dramatic increase in agricultural output, which claimed to adequately sustain the growing population. Yet, North Korea’s race for agricultural productivity was hardly as complete or smooth as purported by the official discourse of North Korea. Historian Kim Sŏngho points out that peasants, in fact, resisted the “immature” and “bureaucratic” intervention of the government-led land reform and collectivization.\(^\text{17}\) More fundamentally, he laments the loss of the earlier agricultural system’s dynamism due to North Korean political system becoming inflexible after Kim Ilsung’s consolidation of power under the ideology of self-autonomy called \textit{chuch’e}. While remaining wary of ensuing political transformation, historians like Kim still praised early agricultural reforms of North Korea for their active role in increasing productivity. By contrast, other scholars whose preference of market economy have informed their work, remain doubtful about the productivity-enhancing capacity of collective agricultural systems under historical socialism, including that of North Korea.


\(^{17}\) Kim, \textit{Nam-Pukhan kyŏngje kujo ŭi kiwŏn kwa chŏn’gae}, 243-244.
Korea, for denying individuals’ desire to pursue self-interests.\(^{18}\) Having witnessed the famine in the 1990s, these scholars proposed privatization and market economy as a solution to the North Korean food crisis. Perhaps it is still important for many historians to determine which agricultural system, collectivization or privatization, is, indeed, more productive for ensuring adequate food supply for the population. But it may be more fruitful for historians of food politics in North Korea to move beyond the myopic question of productivity and policy and, instead, critically reflect on different articulations of this will for improvement in productivity and efficiency in not only the socialist North Korea or the capitalist South Korea, but also other countries in the 20th century.

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