Women, Philanthropy, and Civil Society

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INTRODUCTION

"Philanthropy" is one of the few English words that is still waiting for an appropriate translation in Korea. For most Koreans, love toward humankind is not associated with the practical forms of down-to-earth historical experiences, such as the works of Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Henry Ford. It is an imported notion that is heavily loaded with Western connotations of enlightened individualism, pluralist democracy, civic culture, and advanced capitalism. The difficulty in its translation, however, does not necessarily mean that the concept itself is not accepted in contemporary Korea. (For similar reasons, the Japanese use the English word and write it in Katakana.) On the contrary, the notion is already quite widely received and is becoming more and more of an important part of Korean society. In particular, recent democratization and economic achievements, as well as the fall of the Berlin Wall, have combined to increase the interest, both academic and practical, in the makings of the civic sector in Korea.

As is well known, Korea had been one of the poorest agrarian economies in the world until the early 1960s. Within one generation or so, it has grown into a strong candidate for membership in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with a per capita GNP of $10,000. Ever since the liberation from the Japanese occupation, many forward-looking Korean leaders have aspired to transform the society, to inculcate pluralist democracy instead of authoritarian dictatorship, civic culture instead of subject culture, and enlightened capitalism instead of jungle materialism. But the change has been slow and the reality has always been dynamic and dialectical: competition among contending values, usually old and new, traditional and modern, has ended up in complicated compromises unique to Korea. This is
the process of indigenization of the new and transformation for the old. Women's philanthropy represents a new requirement of the changing Korea, which is also invariably in the process of indigenization, that is, Koreanization.

This paper has three objectives: first, to analyze the concept of women's philanthropy from a Korean perspective; second, to identify and examine the factors that have encouraged and discouraged its development and thereby shaped its making; and, third, to delineate the evolution of women's philanthropy in Korea. After all, this is a case study of the development of women's philanthropy in a country where the age-old authoritarian and patriarchal culture has interacted with the democratic, egalitarian demand of rapid industrialization and its concomitant social changes, particularly of women. In the second section of this paper, the definition and the various ways of classifying women's philanthropic activities are discussed. The third section provides the context of the evolving philanthropy of women in Korea with a number of its potential determinants. Discussed are the nature of the relationship between the organic state and the civic sector in Korea and three other conditions that are deemed to have a direct impact upon women's social position — that is, women's education, women's employment, and the changing family life cycle. The profile and evolution of Korean women's philanthropy is presented in section four. The paper closes with brief remarks on future prospects and directions.

WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY: THE CONCEPT AND CLASSIFICATION

Although the term "philanthropy" is still searching for a proper translation in Korea, it is defined in this paper as voluntary giving of money and time for a public purpose. All non-remunerative activities, not for self-interest but for a public purpose, are to be called philanthropy, to cover the wide range of activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, volunteers, corporate giving, individual donations, nonprofit organizations, and so forth. By this definition, women's philanthropy is a concept much broader than the feminist movement.

The notion of women's philanthropy presupposes a few conditions. Women's voluntary giving of money and time for a public purpose implies, first, women's free will to decide what to do; second, women's possession of money and time; and, third, recognition of women's activities outside the home in connection with public affairs, perhaps with men. These are the conditions that could hardly be met in a Confucian traditional society.
Indeed, considering the age-old patriarchal frame of Confucian culture, which emphasizes women's subordination to men, the idea of women's voluntary giving of time and money for a public purpose is quite revolutionary in itself. Women, under the old Confucian order in Korea, were taught the virtue of the Three Obediences: obedience to parents in childhood, to husband after marriage, and to children (sons) in old age. Absolute obedience to one's husband was held to be an essential virtue of all women. Moreover, there were the so-called Seven Deadly Sins for married women, which could be cited as grounds for divorce: (1) refusal to obey parents-in-law, (2) failure to bear children, (3) adultery, (4) jealousy, (5) contracting a serious malady, (6) garrulity, and (7) theft. It may be noted that except for the last offense, all the other grounds for divorce originated in the requirements of the feudal family system. Divorce was a punishment almost like excommunication, which brought unbearable disgrace not only to the woman but to her family. The wife was taken as a functional asset, not as an individual, for fulfilling various duties in relation to other members of the family. She could not lend anything to others, even to her own father and mother, without her husband's permission. Often she was not allowed to visit her parents without her husband's permission. She was expected to do only household work. The segregation of man and woman was so strict that a married woman was not supposed to expose her face to other men in the street. Consequently, there was no social interaction between men and women, whether married or single.

Lives of Korean women today are incomparably free and independent. They are more educated, many of them are now in paid jobs, occupy high public positions, and participate more in associations than in the past. When compared to the men in Korea, however, gender equality is still more an aspiration than a reality. Women's philanthropic organizations are increasing in number and influence, but they are still very much underfunded and understaffed. The conditions of women's philanthropy mentioned above — that is, the social recognition of women as independent human beings, women's right to property, and gender equality of opportunity in social participation — are still in formation in Korea, circumscribing the contours of women's philanthropic activities.

In order to understand the uniqueness of women's philanthropy in Korea, various dimensions and classificatory criteria might usefully be considered. First, the definition of this study includes both volunteers and donors as philanthropists. Women philanthropists in Korea are mainly the volunteers rather than the donors. Women can give money for a public purpose as philanthropists typically when they are permitted to have inheritance; if they do not donate their inheritance they make them-
selves women of fortune. The image of women philanthropists as donors is closely associated with advanced capitalism. With the development of capitalism, and perhaps with the decreasing influence of familism in Korea, there will be an increasing opportunity for more women donors, but Korea today is at the stage where male tycoons have just begun to show an interest in corporate philanthropy. Now and then the stories of women who bequeath their life savings to the universities appear in the newspaper. But they are mostly those who do not have children or other relatives.

Second, philanthropic activities can be differentiated by their functions: the service functions versus representational advocacy functions. Some provide services such as health, education, personal services, and arts and culture, but others have an essentially representational role, advocating particular causes or on behalf of certain groups. Women’s philanthropic organizations in Korea have had both service and representational functions. But their activities have been very poorly documented. Particularly women’s voluntary services for the poor and sick have been provided through various organizational networks that are mostly initiated under religious auspices, usually male-dominated. Advocacy-oriented women’s philanthropy has been led by women intellectuals and women leaders and has been far louder.

The general relationship between the state and civic sector signifies much of the varying nature of philanthropic activities. Particularly in societies of authoritarian state culture, it is the state that decides what these civic groups can do. The government, with its authorities of financing, regulatory, and service functions, can have one set of relationships with respect to the service functions and another with respect to the advocacy functions of philanthropic organizations. One of the most commonly applied criteria to differentiate the women’s philanthropic organizations has been this relationship with the government — that is, whether they are pro-government or anti-government. Under the authoritarian developmental state, much of the freedom and civil rights of dissenters was curtailed in the name of security and international competition. In the meantime, there was rapid growth not only in industry, but also in civic social groups that demanded a reduction in the state’s relative autonomy. Civic group activities in this period were actually classified by the government into two categories: advocacy-oriented activities for the promotion of social justice, democracy, and human rights on behalf of workers, farmers, and other alienated people in society; and mainly education- and service-oriented groups. While the latter were often actively supported, sometimes initiated, and at other times left relatively less-controlled by the government, the former were labeled as “anti-
government” and severely repressed, many eventually being forced into the underground.

For those who opposed the dictatorial regimes, being pro-government meant supporting the government, which they believed to be corrupt, dictatorial, repressive, illegitimate, and unjust, while the anti-government dissident forces were regarded as representing social justice, progressiveness, righteousness, egalitarianism, and democracy. It was a distinction that led to oversimplification, but it is quite unique to the Korean situation, reflecting the low level of its political development. This sort of characterization has been gradually losing its power with political democratization after 1987. Still, the civic leaders in various new and old organizations are asked which camp they belonged to under those authoritarian regimes, as are the leaders of women’s organizations.

A more analytic classification can be made according to the choice of strategies, as suggested by Kathleen D. McCarthy (1994), who distinguished three philanthropic strategies that American women have used: separatism, assimilationism, and individualism. In separatism, women work together with other women to develop nonprofit organizations and social reform movements. In the assimilationist strategy, they work within male-controlled organizations, generally as donors. The individualist approach is adopted by independent and wealthy women who wandered away from both men’s and women’s groups to create institutions and foundations of their own, on their own. The individualist approach is rarely found in Korea. As a variant form of this approach, there have recently emerged a number of art museums established by the big conglomerates and headed by CEOs’ wives. (There is no gift from the CEOs’ wives involved.) Endowment comes usually from both the company and the owner of the company; the art museum is typically represented by his wife. This type of approach represents the case of another gender division of labor within the families of tycoons in Korea. Very few assimilationists are found as donors to male-controlled nonprofit organizations, except a few women who bequeath their life savings to the universities, as mentioned above.

The major strategy of women’s philanthropy in Korea seems to be separatism in the sense that women work together with other women mainly as volunteers, sometimes as entrepreneurial organizers. Although the number is not well known, there should be many assimilationist women volunteers who have been working in organizations, institutions, and associations where men work together. Female factory workers participate in the labor movement, women volunteers help the handicapped in rehabilitation centers, housewives organize green
community movements—the examples are endless. Sometimes they establish a women’s chapter as a subdivision of the larger organization of the labor movement, environmental movement, consumer movement, and so forth. But other times, women’s separatist organizations incorporate various causes including gender equality and democracy, modernization, and reunification. Thereby they collaborate closely with male-dominated higher-order civic organizations. This is a peculiar aspect of the Korean women’s strategy that requires further elaboration. The Korean women’s separatist strategy is often within the framework of collaborative support from higher-order social movements.

From earlier days, Korean women leaders have tended to participate in higher order social movements for causes broader than women’s development, such as patriotism, national independence, reunification, the urban poor, industrial workers, human rights, the environment, and so forth. Many of them coordinate with larger male-dominated organizations. Thus far, these organizations tend to gain more organized support and have better social standing in Korea. But, as can be seen in the later pages of this paper, feminist voices are raising questions regarding the possible detrimental effects of the assimilationist strategy.

Five dimensions of women’s philanthropy have been discussed, and for each dimension, a number of alternatives are identified. As for the mode of participation, one may be a volunteer, donor, or entrepreneurial organizer. As for the strategy, choices include separatism, assimilationism, and individualism. As for the main function of the activities, a service orientation and advocacy orientation can be differentiated. As for the issue commitment, a specifically feminist commitment and a broader commitment to general social causes can be differentiated. The dimension of the relationship between the state and philanthropic sector is useful particularly when the society has a history of a strong authoritarian state.

WOMEN’S PHILANTHROPY: KOREAN CONTEXTS AND DETERMINANTS

Two of the most striking features of contemporary Korea are its phenomenal economic growth since the early 1960s and its recent democratization. In 1960, per capita GNP was only $80, one of the lowest in the world. In 1995, it reached $10,000. In 1996, Korea became a member of the world’s rich countries’ club, the OECD. Many scholars have attempted to answer the puzzle of why Korea has grown so much faster than most developing countries. Needless to say, many different explanations have been generated. The commonplace observation is that the
miracle has been orchestrated by a strong, ubiquitous, interventionist state. By this success case, the orthodox or neoclassical economic theories that stress the economic benefits of the minimalist regulatory role of the state are severely challenged. All the socioeconomic, politico-cultural changes that Korean society has undergone incorporate dynamic interactions with overarching political authoritarianism. This section describes the changing relationship between the state and the civic sector in general during recent decades, as well as the changing conditions of women through the examination of three major government policy areas.

Two modes describe the relationship between the state and society: the liberal pluralist model and the organic model. Liberal pluralist theorists contend that the state is what the civil society makes of it. The state’s governing structure takes its forms and functions from the diverse groups of various interests and their government. The major state organ through which group views are formulated and negotiated is the legislature. The direction of influence is from society to the state, not vice versa. The state is society-determined and should remain so. The central purpose of the state is to guarantee individual freedom, equality, and happiness as proclaimed in the constitution. The overarching philosophy of the liberal pluralist state is the belief in the primacy of the individual.

On the other hand, the so-called organic theorists of the state contend that the state derives its legitimacy from the very nature of what it ought to be, a provider or a precipitator of a common good, a moral and just order. It moves by its inner ethical and moral imperatives, not necessarily by what the society wills to it. Under the organic state, the relative state autonomy is considerable, though by no means absolute, because an organic state does not negate basic elements of civil society. The state’s primary interest is that these elements conform to work toward common goals and objectives for the collective good.

While the United States is said to be a prime example of the liberal pluralist state, though not without organic features, the state of contemporary Korea comes close to an Asiatic Confucian version of the organic state, although it aspires to move gradually toward the liberal pluralist model. In the Confucian tradition, there is no distinction between the state and society. The role of the state is to cultivate moral values through its rites. It is the state that should educate and by so doing transform the behavior of the rules, not the other way round. People do not determine the role of the state.

Indeed the Korean state during the few decades preceding 1987 may be described as a de facto authoritarian organic state, one that could make vital decisions, essentially ignore their political and social implications, and then implement them with precision. But this state had to suffer from
legitimacy crises, having trouble with the growing civic sector claiming the primacy of the individual and pluralist democracy. Ever since a modern state with a parliamentary form of government was born in 1948 in Korea, several cycles of constitutional and military regimes can be discerned that have swung back and forth. Initially a new regime made an attempt to realize a constitutional democracy, but as time passed it sought to remain in power by repressive measures. Opposition forces and students carried out violent demonstrations to challenge what they perceived to be a dictatorial regime. And as Chalmers Johnson (1988) states, the Olympics with which Chun tried to sponsor Korean nationalism proved to be a great challenge, opening a window of opportunity for protests. He was driven to make concessions, and the Sixth Republic was ushered in by the presidential election of 1987 and the parliamentary election of 1988, inaugurating parliamentary democracy. It survived to be succeeded by the civilian president Y. S. Kim as head of a democratic regime.

Throughout these years, the independent civic sector has been able to develop only in the limited sociopolitical space left by the authoritarian state for legitimate activity. In fact, its roles and functions have been grossly downplayed by the state. Nevertheless, the 1987 Declaration of Democratization itself signified the failure of the authoritarian state and the success of the civic forces, particularly of the opposition coalition forces.

With the abrupt end of the authoritarian regime in June 1987, there emerged increasingly effective and sophisticated civic groups led by the younger generation emphasizing progressive advocacy functions. This positive development within the civic community was accompanied by a remarkable upsurge of public, scholarly, and business attention focused on the role of NGOs and philanthropy, not only as alternative providers of public services but also as a vehicle for active citizen participation. Particularly important is that the new democratic government, of which many leaders were themselves active in opposition groups during the Yushin period, is inclined to appreciate the role of the civic sector not as an adversary but as an ally. This change may contribute to the development of a more effective mechanism to improve cooperation between the state and the civic sector, and perhaps cooperation among civic organizations. Women's philanthropy in Korea has grown along with the recent history of modernization.

**CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN AND DETERMINANTS**

The concept of women's philanthropy makes sense only when women are regarded as independent human beings and are entitled to the same
opportunity for self-expression as men. Foundations for women’s philanthropy in this sense began to be laid in Korea when the Confucian hermit kingdom of the Yi Dynasty began to meet with capitalist Western culture. Individualism as opposed to familism and democracy as opposed to centripetal authoritarianism came into contact with Western technology, Western medicine, and the modern school system, first introduced by Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century. The process of modernization thereafter contributed to the liberation of women in Korea. Three of the many potential determinants of women’s social status today are examined in this section. One is women’s education, initiated by the early Christian missionaries; the second is family planning policies since the 1960s; and the third is the increasing employment of women that accompanied economic growth.

**Modern Education of Women**

Education increases a woman’s ability to participate in society and to improve her quality of life and standard of living. It enables her to raise her productivity in both market and nonmarket work and improves her access to paid employment and higher earnings. Educated women have more control over the time they spend in child-rearing—and thus have more time for productive work outside the home and for leisure. They are more likely to use contraceptives and to have smaller families.

The modern education system was introduced by Christian missionaries and survived the occupation period and on into the post-liberation years. A compulsory public education system at the elementary school level was initiated by forward-thinking Korean educators before independence, and was formally adopted by the government established in 1948. The fundamental enthusiasm for education that lay in the traditional culture itself was increased by the decline of the landlord class after independence. In order to maintain their former social status, many of the former landlords were obliged to invest their residual resources in the education of their children.

From 1953 to 1963, the literacy rate rose from 30 percent to 80 percent. The number of college students rose about eighteen-fold during the same period. This exceptionally successful educational development is often cited as one of the most important factors that has generated the economic success of the 1960s by promoting productivity and technology and by increasing mobility and adaptability for economic change. Moreover, this relatively advanced development of modern education in Korea laid the groundwork for the growth of counterforces that have rejected the state ideology of authoritarianism as well as the ideology of male primacy.
Table 1. School Enrollment Ratio by Level and Sex

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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>102.9</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>101.5</td>
<td>102.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>99.6</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College and University</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During and after the 1960s, education continued to expand with the growing resources available. Enrollment rates at all levels of education increased. That at the elementary level reached 97 percent in 1966 and has registered 100 percent ever since 1970. The same is true for middle and high schools, which increased from 72 percent in 1966 to 92 percent in 1980. As for the gap between men and women in enrollment ratios, at the level of elementary school and middle school the ratios reached 100 percent for both boys and girls as of 1985. At the middle school level, the male enrollment ratio increased from 95.1 percent to 97 percent, while the female rate changed from 92.5 percent to 97.4 percent. The female ratio has not only caught up with the male’s but has slightly surpassed it. A similarly accelerated rate of increase in the female enrollment ratio was found at the high school level where the male enrollment ratio moved from 63.5 percent to 89.2 percent while the female ratio increased from 56.2 percent to 87.9 percent. At the college and university level, the female enrollment ratio more than tripled from 5.8 percent to 19.4 percent while the male’s rose by two and a half times from 11.8 percent to 29.6 percent. In other words, the 1992 female ratio at the college and university level still lagged behind the male’s by more than 10 percent.

As shown in Table 2, Koreans still expect a lower educational attainment of their daughters than of their sons. Whereas 86.5 percent of the respondents expected to have their sons finish college in 1993, only 79.4 percent expected their daughters to finish college. The difference in 1993 is far narrower than that (23 percent) in 1972.

The education policy in Korea has been a great success in extending access. Thereby, women’s educational status has been improved to a great extent. Schools in Korea do not explicitly underwrite gender discrimination. As far as admission policies are concerned, the principle of equal opportunity is honored. But schools seldom take further steps to redress sexual inequality, that is, to take affirmative action for disadvantaged female students. On the contrary, in educational objectives,
the curriculum, textbooks, and all aspects of schooling, the prevailing traditional views on women are taken for granted.

Family Planning and Changes in Family Life Cycle

The Third Republic (1961–69) was convinced that the control of population growth was a prerequisite for fast economic growth. So it launched a rigorous family planning program. The state's policy objective of the Korean Family Planning Program, 1962–71, was to decrease the annual population growth rate from 2.9 percent in 1961 to 2.0 percent by 1971. The program target was later revised to an even lower growth rate of 1.5 percent by 1976, and the growth rate indeed slowed to less than 1.0 percent by 1992. This performance is often quoted as the success story of population control among developing countries.

The state policy of family planning is one of the most obvious means of state intervention into the private area of family life, especially of women. The success of the family planning programs — that is, birth control programs — in Korea has created profound changes in the lives of women. First, fewer children meant overall changes in the life cycle of women, one of whose primary functions was to raise children. Table 3 on the following page shows the changes in the life cycle of three different cohorts of married women as suggested by the recent research of the Korean Institute for Population and Health. The 1935–44 marriage cohorts, who were sixty-one years old on average as of 1985, married at the age of sixteen with a husband five years older and had six children. It took forty years for them to raise and marry all their children. They became widows at fifty-five, that is five years after the last child got married.

The life cycle of the younger women is quite different. As is demonstrated in Table 3, the 1975–85 marriage cohort, whose average age was twenty-eight as of 1985, married late, is expected to have fewer chil-
Table 3. Changing Family Life Cycle by Marriage Cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Cycle Events</th>
<th>1935-44</th>
<th>1955-64</th>
<th>1975-85</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First marriage</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(husband’s age)</td>
<td>(20.8)</td>
<td>(24.3)</td>
<td>(26.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First child’s birth</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last child’s birth</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First child’s marriage</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last child’s marriage</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s death</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of self</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Number of children        | 6       | 4       | 2       |
| Years from first child’s birth to last child’s marriage | 40 | 36 | 28 |
| Years of empty nest       | 1       | 8       | 23      |
| Years from marriage to death | 45 | 46 | 52 |
| Average age as of 1985    | 61      | 46      | 28      |

dren, spend a shorter period in child-raising, and live longer. At the average age of thirty-six, her last child is born. By the time her second child enters college, she is about forty. Being better educated and having more facilities and machines to help her with domestic work, compared to her elder generation, she is in the better position practically to seek opportunities for self-expression outside the home.

Second, the implementation of the family planning programs involved not only technical actions but also the inculcation of changes in values and attitudes regarding family size, the spacing of children, and sex roles. During the 1970s, the family planning slogan was “No distinction of Daughter and Son, Stop at Two and Bring Them Up Well.” The slogan flooded newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. The idea was identified with the forward-looking, change-oriented character of national development. The hidden significant message was something very close to sexual equality, whether the government realized it or not.

Third, the nationwide family planning movement brought about the creation of an immense national network of Mothers’ Clubs. Since 1968 the Mothers’ Clubs had been organized on a voluntary basis in order to promote motivation and participation in family planning among members. By 1971, they had grown into a nationwide movement with a membership of twenty to forty women in each of nineteen thousand...
villages. It has become a basic multipurpose organ for the nationwide new village movement. Thereby the Mothers’ Clubs at the village level have helped in integrating the family planning program into the broader aspects of community development. It is arguable to what extent these Mothers’ Clubs were instrumental for more effective population control, but it is significant to note that this organization provided a precious window for women’s social participation, especially in rural villages.

**Job Creation and Double Burden**

There has been a positive relationship between the progress of economic development and women’s participation in the world of work outside the home. Not only in terms of an absolute and relative increase in the number of working women, but also in terms of the increasing variety of jobs open to them, economic growth during the last few decades has indeed brought with it unprecedented opportunities for Korean women. No line of work is completely closed to women, and even the deeply seated taboos against women entering the mines or boarding ships have been broken down.

Such a seemingly smooth picture, however, obscures certain peculiarities characterizing the pattern of women’s participation in the nation’s overall work force. The first peculiarity, and of overriding importance, is the fact that the women’s labor force is heavily concentrated in the unskilled, low-paying sectors of the economy. For the two decades between 1960 and 1980, the largest improvement in the women’s participation ratio occurred in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, where it jumped from 30.4 percent to 44.9 percent. Women’s participation in the manufacturing sector also increased sharply, from 26.7 percent to 36.2 percent, reflecting an eight-fold increase in absolute terms. But here, too, most of the women were concentrated in the production lines of the textile industry, the leader in the rapidly expanding export economy, which was banking on the readily available pool of cheap but high quality labor that women provided. As the economy expanded, women’s participation in white collar work also registered a steady rise. But most of these women were found in a limited variety of low-skill or unskilled jobs — receptionist, typist, or telephone operator. Men, by contrast, exercised a near monopoly on middle management and supervisory positions.

The second feature to be pointed out in the labor force participation of Korean women is the double load of domestic work and market-oriented activities that a large segment of them bear. In 1970, of the women engaged in agriculture and forestry, 87.8 percent were married, and 75.5 percent of them worked without pay. In the tertiary sector, the highest ratio of women’s participation has been in the service segment, in
which small businesses employ fewer than two persons and are run on the family premises. Here, women are expected to carry their normal load of work as housewives in addition to producing goods and services for sale. In each case, women’s work outside the home, although it makes a vital contribution to the household economy, is looked upon as a secondary activity, never to be offered as a grounds for neglecting women’s traditional responsibilities as homemakers. Support systems such as child care facilities or husbands sharing the housework are still almost totally absent.

The third anomaly, closely related to the second, is that the women’s labor force participation ratio is higher in the lower educational bracket and in rural areas. Since it is the man who is traditionally looked upon to provide for the family, even when he is actually incapable of doing so, the fiction has to be carefully maintained for the peace of all concerned. This means that women have to engage in income-producing activities, making themselves as inconspicuous as possible, and forego better employment opportunities even when they present themselves. This negative attitude toward work, in turn, breeds a negative attitude toward working women, which further limits women’s chances of obtaining favorable opportunities.

These characteristics indicate that the dramatic rise in the proportion of women working outside the home has not been accompanied by an equally impressive improvement in the relative economic status of women. The relationship between women’s paid employment and unpaid philanthropy is moot because there is no information available regarding exactly who are the women volunteers, women donors, and women entrepreneurial philanthropists.

Women’s philanthropy in a given society is determined by numerous variables. Some are favorable, and others are unfavorable; they also interact with each other. Confucian values of the organic state that downplay the role of the pluralist civic sector, Confucian values of authoritarian patriarchal familism that presuppose women’s subordination, and the traditional gender division of labor both in the public and private spheres are the factors that limit women’s participation in philanthropic activities. Advancement of women’s education and self-consciousness, increasing labor market participation, and the changing family life cycle due to successful family planning policy are some of the forces that push women from the traditional roles within the family into the broader society and encourage women’s philanthropy. Of course, the reality is far more complicated. Each factor interacts with the others and does not necessarily correlate in a simple linear way with the dependent variable with the same strength. The dynamism of the gender division of labor,
gender discrimination, and male supremacy interacts with the forces that demand women's minimum dignity. The most painful devaluation of women is the physical and psychological violence that stalks women from cradle to grave. Sexual abuse, domestic violence, and rape represent the major elements of discrimination and the unacceptably low status of women in Korea. In the following section, Korean women's philanthropy is portrayed together with its achievements.

**WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY: EVOLUTION AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

Women's status and the conditions of the society determine women's philanthropy, but women's status is also influenced by women's philanthropy itself. In other words, women's status, women's philanthropy, and the conditions of civic society are all closely interrelated, influencing each other. Korean women's status, both within and outside the family, is still very low. The Confucian value of familism, which takes women's subordination for granted, is still strong. When compared to the old days, however, improvement has been phenomenal. How much of this improvement can be ascribed to women's actions is difficult to answer. There is still much to be achieved, but the leading women philanthropists have been very effective. In addition to the factors discussed above, one more factor to be emphasized is the role of Christianity in the modernization process in Korea. Very special recognition should be given to the early Christian missionaries who taught the first Korean schoolgirls, their provision of leadership training for church women, and the Christian community that has led the Korean civic sector throughout its modern history. Christianity has not comprised the entire civic sector in Korea, but it has always been a large part of it. As will be shown in the following pages, bases of Korean women's philanthropy were laid by the education of women that was started by Christian missionaries at the same time as that of men, and those bases worked with, if not within, the Christian civic community.

The evolution of women's philanthropy in Korea is divided roughly into three stages. The first is the period from the early twentieth century to the early 1960s; the second, up until the late 1980s; the third, from 1987 to the present. This discussion will be followed by an analysis of a few achievements in the form of legal and institutional changes.

**Evolution of Women's Philanthropy**

It is known that the first women's underground network was the Songjuk-hoe, formed in 1913. Its establishment signaled the beginning of an organized movement by women. The Songjuk network acted as
a consumers' organization for women's retail shops, promoting patriotism in the minds of the people. It played an important role in the March 1st Movement in 1919. Underground activities extended abroad until the end of Japanese rule. The detailed background of the members is not known, but by 1909, there were 605 schools established by the Presbyterian Church and 200 schools established by the Methodist Church, with an average of twenty to thirty students per school. Ewha Hakdang, the first girls' mission school in Korea, already had a thirty-year history. Christian educational activity had indeed made an important contribution to the modernization of Korea.

Early Christian missionaries discovered Hangul's (the Korean alphabet) superior effectiveness in communication and thereby helped the people, both men and women, become literate in their own language system. Korea was by no means without an education system or without zeal for education; on the contrary, the traditional aspiration for education is well known. But while the Confucian tradition is perhaps responsible for the high regard for learning, it was Christian missionaries who laid the foundation for a Western-style education system. The first Western-style schools opened by the missionaries were Ewha and Paichai, one for the girls and the other for the boys. In providing modern education, there was no time lag unfavorable to women. The girls' mission schools in particular accelerated the changes in process, and it is fair to say that the participation of women in every level of social life, although limited, came with Christianity.

Protestant missionaries stressed the cultivation of Christian women, encouraged their participation in Bible classes and church activities, and sought, above all, to make them keepers of Christian homes, devotedly rearing Christian children. This was the early missionaries' response to the greater resistance encountered among men in general, and upper-class men in particular. The modern Christian injunction against polygamy gradually abolished concubinage. The Christian worship place provided a forum where men and women were able to associate, although a heavy curtain usually divided the sexes. It was the first opening of the women's place outside the home.

In fact, Christian churches offered women historic new opportunities for growth and self-expression, which no Korean religion had offered before. To prepare them for leadership positions in the church, girls' schools were founded. These quickly grew and developed into modern institutions, which in turn opened careers for women as well, in higher education, medicine, and other technical fields. There women learned to read and solve problems; they learned history, English, and democratic principles; and their senses were sharpened to the issues of justice and
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opportunity for women. The Confucian tradition placed and still places women at a disadvantage in many aspects of life, but the progress made possible for them within and through the Christian church was nothing short of revolutionary.

It is logical to expect that the first woman who would satisfy the fundamental conditions for women’s philanthropy in Korea would be a Christian woman who had been directly or indirectly exposed to the education and leadership training provided by the churches or mission schools, outside the home for the first time. Under Japanese colonial rule, the Christian church became a center of an anti-Japanese national independence movement. Christianity gathered strength and support from Koreans who used church institutions as havens from Japanese oppression. In other words, Christianity enabled Korean believers to feel both patriotic and modern at the same time. Many of the Christian women leaders, a cornerstone of the Korean church, organized a women’s movement that was affiliated with the anti-Japanese movement.

In the 1920s, the socialist movement of political activism attracted quite a number of women intellectuals, but it could not survive for long. The mainstream of the women’s movement was the educational and cultural movement and led mostly by Christian liberals. Of the Christian liberals, the part of the women’s movement focused on education was sustained throughout the colonial period. Various activities were organized by many elite women of Christian faith to educate women to be literate and to help them adapt to a new way of life. The Korean YWCA was an important organization at that time.

In the years from liberation to independence, civic groups of varying ideological preferences blossomed. After independence, the state was preoccupied with maintaining security as its primary national goal, the civic organizations were mostly service-oriented, and the women’s organizations were instrumental to the task of nation-building. After the war, many civic organizations emerged to provide welfare services or to implement development projects for the poor, and they were mostly supported, if not established, by foreign aid.

The second stage was set with the de facto authoritarian developmental state, which lacked political legitimacy but achieved remarkable success in export-oriented economic growth. It lasted from the early 1960s until 1987 when it fell with the Great Workers’ Struggle (June to September). As already mentioned, during this period the authoritarian developmental state curtailed much of the freedom and civil rights of dissenters in the name of national security and international competition.

There developed two different but related lines in the women’s move-
ment. One came from the forceful democratization and labor movements of the 1970s. The other was intimately related to the visible increase of women’s participation in the public sphere and the rise of new consciousness stimulated by the women’s liberation movement in the West. The former represents the assimilationist strategy, even though women participated in these movements mainly through the economy of time. The latter is more clearly a separatist approach. The woman question from the point of view of democratization and the labor movement focused on women as revolutionary agents and laborers. Most activists working along this line were Christian activists in the labor movement in the beginning stage, ex-student activists and female workers themselves in the later stage. Factory women workers who had been in the harsh labor struggle of the 1970s formed groups to continue their struggle.

In another setting, a large number of female students joined in the struggle against the dictatorial regime of the 1970s, leading to the organization of female activists. The first grassroots organization of this kind was PyongU-hoe (Women for Equality and Peace), which was established in 1983 by a group of female college graduates. Most of the group members were university professors, lecturers, and graduate students in social sciences. Their aims were to eliminate sexism, to build a humanistic society for men and women through the common effort of men and women, and to overcome the tragedy of national division. Specifically the group was engaged in the fight for political democratization along with the established Nationalistic Democratic movement, and they also wanted to promote gender equality independently from the movement. This group dissolved in 1986. Some of the founding members of PyongU-hoe mapped out a plan to form a coalition of grassroots organizations of women. This led to Korean Women’s Associations United (KWAU) launched in 1987, in the middle of the highest tide of the political democratization movement.

Another stream of the women’s movement clearly originated from women’s specific experiences. News of the women’s liberation movement in the West contributed a great deal to the circulation of the issues of gender equality. Liberal ideology and a feminist perspective underlay this stream of the movement. There are now several grassroots organizations of this kind. The Women’s Hotline was established in 1984 by a group of housewives with liberal Christian backgrounds. They were members of the women’s studies group organized by Christical Academy. One group specialized in battered women’s problems with a firm belief that women’s oppression could not be a secondary concern. The first weekly feminist newspaper, the Women’s News, was started in 1988.

The 1980s were a time of extraordinary growth in the women’s
movement in Korea. Groups and organizations that identify with the women's movement were formed in major cities, and increasing numbers of women participated in the labor, urban poor, environmental, consumer, community child care, democratic education, and various cultural movements. They tend not to make distinctions between the feminist movement and the broader social movement. Their charters typically incorporate both gender equality and broader causes like reunification, democratization, nationalist populist democracy, social justice, and so forth.

It should be noted that the formal structure of cooperation between the government and the civic groups was also established during these years. All civic groups and NGOs were expected to register with competent ministries either for establishment as a legally recognized organization or for mere recognition as a public body. As the number of registered NGOs increased and the issues came to require more professional information and management, the ministries began to establish quasi-governmental organizations as intermediate institutions between NGOs and the government. Also during this period, the women's movement expanded, and their organizations became active. For instance, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs established the Korean Women's Development Institute as a quasi-governmental organization as early as 1983. This was a gesture by the government of support for the women's movement and was not regarded as a challenge to the regime. KWDI activities include not only policy research and support of women's organizations, but also direct services to the community.

The third stage began with the abrupt end of the authoritarian regime in June 1987. New to this stage of evolution of Korean women's philanthropy was the emergence of increasingly effective and sophisticated civic groups led by the younger generation emphasizing progressive advocacy functions, including efforts to broaden public debate and participation in the formulation of public policy, safeguarding or expanding the domain of human rights, and safeguarding public goods such as the environment against the pressures of economic growth. To name only a few very effective NGOs established after 1987, the Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice, established in 1989 by five hundred founding members as a citizen's organization to express opinions on general policy issues with a broad focus on economic justice; Korea Action Federation for Environment, established in 1994 by former opposition movement leaders who view environmental issues as related to the more fundamental questions of people's right to life; the anti-nuclear movement; the anti-Chaebol movement, and most of the listed organizations for human rights. These and other relatively new organizations are new additions
that are in fact leading components of the contemporary civic sector in Korea.

Another important feature of the third sector in post-1987 Korea is the flux of the business sector's interest in the notion of corporate citizenship. It is related to the new progressive civic leaders' anti-Chaebol movement, as well as the new government's transparency policy for fair competition and for severing the old symbiotic relationship between the state and big business. The largest conglomerates are now competing with each other for social philanthropic programs for various reasons. The number of corporate foundations has increased rapidly during the last few years. The art museums mentioned above are a part of this trend. Civic volunteerism has been promoted by the media, and by the revision of the Education Act in 1996, all schoolchildren are required to have volunteer experience.

The map of the third sector in Korea is changing rapidly. Korean women's age-old voices for gender equality have been heard, and a number of important legal and institutional achievements have been recently made. Before going into these achievements, a brief description of the actual status of women's organizations in Korea is useful.

As stated already, women's philanthropy is indeed a poorly documented area. It was in 1988 that the KWDI published the first book of women's organizations in Korea, listing 2,200 groups. In the second book, published in 1994, 4,050 women's organizations were identified and listed. An increase in numbers does not necessarily represent an actual increase, but it might represent improved efforts of seeking out the organizations. It provides a picture of only separatist organizations. The current status of these women's organizations has seldom been studied empirically. It was in 1991 that the KWDI conducted a survey of these organizations concerning their organizational structure, staffing, purpose of establishment, financial status, and other characteristics. Out of 2,200 identified women's organizations, 303 responded to the study. And only 80 responded to the budget-related questions. Assuming that the respondents represented the most active organizations, the survey shows how poorly they are financed and staffed. Most of the organizations were dependent upon annual membership fees, which ranged from $15,000 to $75,000. Most of them had either only one or no full-time paid clerks or secretaries. Financial support from the government was concentrated on a few politically strategic organizations such as the Korean War Dead Soldier and Police Widows' Association (Veterans' Administration), the National Conference of Housewives for Betterment of Home Life (Ministry of Human Affairs), Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations (Ministry of Justice), and the National YWCA (Ministry of Health and Welfare).
Recent Achievements

Despite their poor financing and staffing, the perseverance of Korean women’s organizations achieved important institutional changes. As has been stated above, it is difficult to carve out the exact impact of women’s philanthropy or the women’s movement on the status of women in the society. But it has been since the 1980s, particularly after 1987, that a broad range of laws has been revised to remove gender biases or was newly enacted to introduce institutional adjustments for women’s advancement.

One of the oldest issues for the women’s community has been the revision of the Family Law (Domestic Relations and Inheritance Clauses of the Civil Code). The Family Law, in its 1958 version, contained many traditional elements contrary to the principle of gender equality, especially with respect to marital, divorce, and inheritance rights. The law was revised in 1990 to remove discriminatory elements and to accord women a status almost equal to men’s. Thus it introduced an egalitarian family system with the husband and the wife at its center as equal partners. The revised Family Law granted women the right to head a family, something previously unthinkable in the country’s heavily Confucian culture, and severely opposed by the orthodox Confucianists in contemporary Korea. It also removed male privileges in inheritance and gave women the right to claim their share of family property even without formal title to it. Furthermore, it granted divorced women the right to guardianship over their children. In support of the revised Family Law and its full and speedy implementation, the government took steps to adjust related tax laws and to legislate the Domestic Litigation Act. For instance, the Inheritance and Gift Tax Act, revised in 1990 and again in 1994, upwardly adjusted the level of tax exemption for the wife’s inheritance from her spouse’s estate. This came in clear legal recognition of the right of the housewife to her share in the family property even when she had not contributed to it directly through gainful outside employment. The Property Tax Assessment Regulations, used to check the source of funds for acquiring property, previously contained gender-discriminatory definitions of taxable sources of funds and gender-differential tax deduction ceilings. Such inequalities were removed by the June 1991 revision of the regulations.

The Family Law Revision movement started in the 1960s and was led by the first woman lawyer in Korea, who established the Legal Aid Center for Family Relations in the early 1960s, which has now become an institute with more than 150 staff and extension offices nationwide.

Another important area of legal enactment and revisions actively sought by women’s organizations has been sanctions for the equal
treatment of women at the workplace. It was in 1987, after the Great Workers’ Struggle, that the Equal Employment Opportunity Act was first legislated to realize the principle of gender equality in employment opportunities and conditions and to protect motherhood in the women’s work context as stipulated in the Constitution. It is also aimed at developing women’s occupational potential and thereby advancing their socioeconomic status. This act codified the principle of gender-equal treatment of all workers and the maternity right of working women. It has also made it possible to impose sanctions against employers engaging in gender-discriminatory personnel practices.

While the 1987 Equal Employment Opportunity Act was the country’s first legal instrument for enforcing the equal treatment for equal work principle and for protecting women’s maternity rights, there was a need for making these provisions, as well as the nondiscriminatory recruitment and employment requirements, more explicit. Accordingly, the act was revised in April 1989. The revised act, inter alia, provides for the extension of unpaid child care leave for up to one year and for counting the leave period as part of a consecutive work period. Furthermore, in labor disputes, the burden of proof has been shifted from the employee to the employer.

To strengthen its powers of enforcement, the revised act stipulates penalties of up to two years in prison or a fine of up to 5 million won ($6,250), and fine of up to 250 million won ($312,500) for violating the equal recruitment, training, placement, and promotion requirements and the child care leave provision.

In a similar vein, the Labor Standard Act of 1953, based on Article 32, Item 4 of the Constitution, was also revised to ensure equal treatment of working men and women (Article 5) and to protect women’s maternity rights in the work context (Chapter 5). Previously, a limited range of employers were bound by the Labour Standard Act. Following its revision on March 29, 1989: (1) all business/industrial establishments with five or more employees are bound by it; (2) penalties for noncompliance are stiffer; (3) the employer is required to grant menstrual leave even without the employee requesting it; and (4) the employer now must seek the consent of female employees for their overtime work, whereas, previously, only the permission of the Minister of Labour was necessary. To encourage its speedy implementation by concerned employers, the revised Labour Standard Act stipulates harsher penalties for noncompliance. A fine of up to five million won ($6,250) has been set for violation of the equal treatment for equal work clause and up to five years’ imprisonment or a 30 million won ($37,500) fine has been set for violation of the maternity rights protection clause.
In the same year, the regulations governing the national civil service examination were revised, and in the following year, regulations governing the employment of local civil servants were revised, so that there is no longer gender-based discrimination in the recruitment process of civil servants at either the national or the local level. Some local governments have gone further to adopt a goal of increasing the proportion of women civil servants.

To support women's gainful employment, the Infant and Child Care Act followed in 1991. This law came in response to urgent child care service needs brought about by a rapid rise in the number of women entering the labor market and participating in civic activities. Under the act, a comprehensive child care service system, with priorities for the children of low-income families with working mothers, is in the process of being established. The act contains, inter alia, the requirement that all business/industrial firms with more than five hundred female employees must establish at least one care facility each within their respective premises, or, alternatively, subsidize external child care service charges incurred by their female employees.

The act has not only established a legal foundation for systematizing and expanding child care facilities and services required by women's entry into the social and economic fields but has succeeded in bringing the state, local governments, and legislative bodies into the effort as major partners. At the same time, it has helped to establish, in the public mind, the fact that child care issues are public as well as domestic issues bearing simultaneously on the advancement of women and that of the Korean society as a whole.

The most recent achievement has been the passage of the Law for Punishing Sexual Offenders and Protecting Victims of Sexual Assault. This law provides for strict punitive measures for offenders and medical treatment, temporary shelters, and counseling services for victimized women, but many difficulties are being discussed in its implementation. In addition to these legal revisions, it was in 1988 that the government appointed a woman as the Minister of Political Affairs (II) in 1988 and empowered her to coordinate all governmental and nongovernmental activities directed toward the advancement of Korean women. The Ministry, in consultation with other sectoral ministries concerned, identifies issues and problems relating to women and develops and recommends policy measures to address them. Where activities of the concerned ministries and agencies overlap or come into conflict, the Ministry intervenes to bring about the necessary adjustments. All government ministries and organs at various levels are required to consult the Ministry in advance when drafting new laws or planning new programs with implications
for women. The Minister of Political Affairs (II) is assisted by a Vice Minister, an Assistant Minister, and four Coordinators for Political Affairs. The women’s community in Korea demands this Ministry to develop into a full Ministry of Women’s Affairs.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Lives of Korean women today are relatively free and independent. They are more educated, many of them are now in paid jobs, more of them occupy high public positions, and they participate more in associations. But this is true only when compared to the past. When compared to the men in contemporary Korea, gender equality is still a myth, not a reality. Women’s philanthropic organizations are increasing in number and influence, but they are still very much underfunded and understaffed. The conditions of women’s philanthropy mentioned above — that is, the social recognition of women as independent human beings, women’s right to property, and gender equality of opportunity in social and economic participation — are still on the way to formation in Korea, circumscribing the contours of women’s philanthropic activities in Korea.

This is part of the general picture of the Korean philanthropic community. In all the voluntary organizations, women predominate in number. This is because of the absolutely small size of the third sector in this country. Volunteering is not a part of our daily community lives. But male donors are coming along. Though the Inheritance Tax Law has been revised recently, many female counterparts are hardly expected to come along soon. Nevertheless, the recent achievements of institutional changes for women’s development are quite impressive. How was it possible? One plausible answer is that despite the poor financial condition of the women’s organizations, the leadership of a number of organizational entrepreneurs was extremely effective. Many of them were educated in segregated women’s colleges and trained as women leaders at the churches. But in pursuing their goals of institutional changes, they gathered support from the broader male camp because of their assimilationist strategy.

Now the two policy issues have come to the fore. One is the question of the place of women. The other is philanthropy’s relationship with the government. These are the two out of five dimensions of the concept of women’s philanthropy discussed in the second section of this paper. As mentioned above, contemporary Korean women have more opportunity to participate in the philanthropic sector than before. The KWAVU consolidated further, having united most grassroots women’s organiza-
KWAU is known for its assimilationist causes, incorporating not only gender equality but also reunification and rationalization of society. The feminist question is only secondary for most of these effective new associations. Now, with the expansion of the civic sector, feminist leaders are facing the choice between separatism and assimilationism. And this issue is being raised by feminist women scholars and active philanthropists.

But the Korean women's movement emerged along with the need for the nation's independence. This character is shaped by the context of national history. Korean history has been interspersed with the experiences of colonialism, economic backwardness, division of the nation, and authoritarianism. Such historical circumstances have led women in Korea to participate in the movement for national liberation, modernization, reunification, and democratization of Korean society. Since the women's movement has developed around issues related to socioeconomic structures, women's rights issues, especially in the private sphere, have been the subject of benign neglect in the movement. In many cases, women have been asked to put aside their own demands in order to support a struggle for independence or democracy. This historical heritage is still predominant, and the question remains unanswered. The concern is that this approach, not identical but similar to the assimilationist strategy, may yield unintended consequences, strengthening the institutions and professional aspirations of men to the detriment of other women, as the experiences of the advanced countries show.

The second issue is related to the government's policy toward the third sector. The new democratic government wants to play an explicit conducive role for the development of philanthropy. Each department is so anxious to help the voluntary sector that departmental competition is severe to become competent authorities for voluntary activities and civic organizations. Given the age-old tradition of organic statism in Korea, the relationship between the government and the philanthropic sector is expected to evolve in unique ways.