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The Visual Embodiment of Women in the Korea Mission Field

Hyaeweol Choi

This article explores the role of missionary photography in enhancing our understanding of Christian mission history. It specifically focuses on the visual embodiment of women whose lives and stories have largely been overlooked in the history of Korean Christianity. Tracing the early pictorial images of women in relation to missionary writings, the article demonstrates the ways in which photographs—either in natural or staged settings—were taken, circulated, and appropriated for the purposes of missionary goals. In doing so, the article argues that missionary photography is an expedient analytical tool to plumb the dynamic interactions between the missionaries and the missionized and to demonstrate the interplay between material culture and human desire.

In his preface to the catalogue of a pioneering exhibition of photography from the Korea mission field, Donald Clark argues that missionary photography offers a unique window on the Korean experience with the modern, and perhaps more importantly, the dynamic transcultural interactions between Koreans and Western missionaries.¹ To put it differently, missionary photography can serve as a critical device for excavating the complex realities missionaries and Korean converts experienced within the specific historical context of the Korean mission that began in the late nineteenth century. Despite its analytical importance for gaining a fuller understanding of Korean modern history as well as the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, missionary photography has drawn

relatively little attention from the scholarly community.² This article is a modest attempt to fill the gap by exploring the complementary role that photographic images fill in interpreting the Korea mission field when they are construed in relation to textual representations. It is also an endeavor to probe the ways in which photographs—either in natural or staged settings—were taken, circulated, and appropriated for the purposes of missionary goals.³

From the viewpoint of missionaries, photography was an indispensable tool for recording, categorizing, and publicizing “the other” as it captured the presumed essence of the local people, the unique, unusual objects and exotic natural setting, as well as the triumphs and tribulations of the mission field. According to Helen Gardner and Jude Philp, from the 1850s “missionaries around the world had turned the new science of photography to the service of the mission.”⁴ By the time the first group of American Protestant missionaries arrived in Korea in 1884, the modern form of photography had already gained popularity in the United States,⁵ and especially from the 1890s, missionary photographs began to provide a much more vivid portrait of Koreans and Korean customs in the pages of mission journals.⁶ Many images from the photographs, ranging from candid shots of scantily clad, dirty, vacant-looking locals in the streets to the staged group portraits of recent converts in front of the Western-style churches, schools, and hospitals newly built by the missionaries, present a visual manifestation of the imagined gulf between the West and the Other, the urgency to civilize the people of non-Christian countries by spreading the gospel, and the triumphant spirit of missionaries in Christianizing the world.

The early Korean Christian converts remained illiterate for the most part and thus could not leave much in the way of literature to convey their own experiences. The visual images of the people, objects, and surroundings projected through the camera can provide an alternative means to give voice to people who were not equipped to express their thoughts and experiences in writing.⁷ To be sure, the converts were largely the subjects of missionary photography, and missionaries framed the images, determining how the Koreans would be presented, similar to the way they were represented in a particular way in the missionary discourse. However, the simple fact of their being in front of the camera and choosing certain poses (or being asked to pose in a certain way) in a specific time and place can offer a myriad of insights into the “referent” (i.e., the subject of the photograph).⁸ In their analysis of the visual culture of American religions, David Morgan and Sally Promey stress that the analysis of images helps us understand the “nonverbal articulation” of

place, status, power, alliance, affection, class, race, and gender.⁹ It is in this “nonverbal articulation” of the material, institutional, discursive, and human conditions that visual images uniquely contribute to our understanding of the complex and dynamic interactions between the missionaries and the missionized.

The article specifically examines the visual embodiment of women in the Korea mission field. There are two reasons for this focus. One is that the history of Christian women in modern historiography still remains scant and underexplored despite the significant role that women had in expanding church membership.¹⁰ The other is related to the expediency of gender as an analytical category for a fuller understanding of the Korean experience of the “modern,” in which Protestant Christianity played a significant role. As is well known, the “woman question” took center stage in the discourse and practice of modernity after Korea began its open-door policy in 1876, and Protestant Christianity was pivotal in fashioning modern womanhood. American women missionaries, in particular, have been heralded as the pioneers who ushered in the example of modern gender roles. The fact that the majority of “educated” new women in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century had been exposed, directly or indirectly, to Christian mission schools and churches suggests the extensive influence Christianity had in shaping modern Korean womanhood.¹¹ Adopting postcolonial and feminist perspectives, I have discussed elsewhere the power of missionary discourse and the politics of gender and race that shaped a certain kind of new and modern womanhood within the particular historical circumstances of early modern Korea.¹² Building on these earlier analyses, this article centers on the visual to complement our understanding of the gender dynamics in the Korean mission field within the context of Korea’s pursuit of modern nationhood.

In attempting to read visual representations in missionary photography, I have found it useful to adopt Kathleen Canning’s thesis on the body as a historical method in the analysis of the transcultural encounters between Korean women and American missionaries.¹³ The body—physical, social, and cultural—has been understood as a signifier of nation, state, class, and other social categories. Within the hierarchical power relations that were in place at the height of imperialism and foreign missionary enterprise in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the body served as an effective marker to measure the level of civilization a society had achieved in the Westerners’ point of view. However, the construction of the “modern” body in the mission field was never a forced process imposed by the missionaries but rather was a product of intercultural negotiation. The embodied images, gestures, and practices in

photography are, therefore, an important repository for understanding this dynamic process and context.

The first section of the article traces the earliest pictorial and photographic images in major missionary journals for women to illustrate the multiple representations and realities that characterized the relationship between American missionaries and Korean women, with particular attention to both the tensions and complementarities that existed between the textual and visual representations of Korean women. It also analyzes a gradual shift in visual representations of Korean women from nameless, exotic creatures not yet converted to Christianity to transformed individuals, often baptized and taking Western names, who are actively pursuing the “truth.” The second part focuses on one of the most noteworthy visual spectacles captured in missionary photographs—the public display of bare breasts by local women. This section discusses how such photographs, some of which were staged, were consumed as a manifestation of paganism but simultaneously became the site of cultural negotiations over what might be considered proper bodily presentation in public space. The portrayal of Bible women is the focus of the last section. Korean Bible women were indispensable for the success of the evangelical endeavors of the mission. Against the background of the interdependent relationship between American missionary women and Korean Bible women, the last section closely reads the visual messages of the photographs in terms of the impact of the encounters between American and Korean women in the midst of the patriarchal organization of the church and Korean family. In its analysis of these aspects of missionary photography, the article argues that visual images are a useful focus for analysis in order to re-articulate missionary desire and bring out the hidden voices of Korean women.

Visual Images of the “Heathen” Women from Afar

The Heathen Woman’s Friend (1869–1895), published by the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was one of the most influential women’s mission journals.¹⁴ In that journal, the first article on Korea was printed in the January issue of 1885, immediately after the first group of American Protestant missionaries had arrived in Korea in 1884. The article, “A Call from Corea,” was written by Rijutei and bears the dateline “Tokio, August 8, 1884.” Rijutei (also known as Yi Sujōng) was a newly converted Korean man residing in Japan. He went to Japan in 1882 as part of a special envoy team from

the Korean government. From that time, he developed intellectual and religious ties with both American missionaries and the Japanese Christian elite.¹⁵ The crux of his “call” was to urge Americans to send women missionaries to Korea in order to educate Korean women because he believed that “to elevate and reform people, to educate children, to lead their husbands to virtue, are woman’s mission [*sic*].” He depicted Korean customs that “are quite unlike either the Chinese or Japanese, *the power of the sex being about equal*” (emphasis added). He further elaborated by saying: “If wives are ever so bad, they cannot be divorced; so if an unhappy match is made, it must extend through life. On the other hand, though the husband be ever so ill-mannered, if he have a good wife he will become a better man. For though he be ever so bad, and dislike his wife’s good character, he cannot divorce her, and she must ever exert a correcting influence on his life.” Given this power of the Korean woman as a moral arbiter, Rijutei strongly advocated women’s education as part of Korea’s enlightenment project, and he felt that American missionary women would provide invaluable support in the initial stages.

Along with his plea, Rijutei noted that he wanted to mail to the journal “a photograph of a common Korean woman . . . as it may give you a general idea of the appearance and dress of the women in my country.”¹⁶ This photograph, which was actually a hand-painted portrait likely based on a photograph, appeared the following year (1886) in the same journal in an article called “A Woman of Korea,” written by Mrs. E. W. Rice (fig. 1). It was the first picture of a Korean woman ever published in *Heathen Woman’s Friend*. The article noted: “Of the name and personal history of the woman of the picture, we know nothing. She is simply a Korean woman, whose picture has come to us by way of Japan. She may stand as a representative of her race, and her life history may be easily guessed.”¹⁷ Judging from her hair style, the picture is a portrait of a married woman, wearing traditional Korean dress and sitting on the floor. Although the flowers of the plant boxes that flank her soften the background somewhat, her stern face, upright posture, and piercing eyes looking straight back at the viewer convey that role of woman as the moral guide for men and children that was described by Rijutei.

In the two-page essay that accompanies this picture, Mrs. E. W. Rice, who did not serve in the Korea mission field but very likely did work at the journal *Heathen Woman’s Friend*, presents a sketch of Korean womanhood, including the practice of physical “seclusion” after age seven if the girl belonged to the upper class, the arranged marriage, and her subordination to her husband and his family. She acknowledges “a certain sort of outward respect” shown to women in Korea, noting that a Korean



Fig. 1. A Korean woman. From *Heathen Woman's Friend*, 17, no. 8 (1886): 182.

woman “is addressed in terms of honor. The man steps aside to let her pass him on the street, and holds a fan before his face lest he should catch a glimpse of hers. . . . For a man to speak to her would be a gross insult to her, and worse still, a dire breach of manners for him.” She continues, “in spite of all this formal politeness to woman, the Korean believes her destitute of moral existence, a being without a soul, unworthy of a name, a creature without rights or responsibilities, only a convenient adjunct to some man—his daughter, his wife, his mother! Ages of mental and moral degradation have, perhaps, taught the woman herself to believe what her lord believes, almost to be what she thinks herself.” Rice concludes, “Verily, women should thank God for birth in a Christian land!”¹⁸

One can readily see certain contradictions when the Korean (Rijutei's)

and the American (Rice's) discourses are juxtaposed. Rijutei's description of the active role of the Korean woman as the example of moral virtue is undermined by that of Rice, in which the Korean woman is ultimately relegated to the status of "only a convenient adjunct to some man" without her own soul or morality. While each writer presented a positive view of the role that Christianity could have in the future of Korea, they clearly had different agendas to put forward: Rijutei's pursuit of modern Korea with the help of Christianity and Western education as opposed to Rice's interest in promoting the foreign mission to save non-Christian women from misery and "moral degradation." The different subjectivities of the authors with different mandates render contradictory representations of the status of Korean women. It is noteworthy that Rijutei's contribution to *Heathen Woman's Friend* was a very rare occurrence of a foreign voice in the journal. For the most part, mission journals were almost exclusively an outlet for American missionaries or workers in mission organizations at home. As is demonstrated by Rice's piece, writers at home sometimes penned articles for the mission journal with no firsthand knowledge of the place they were writing about, using information they had gathered from available publications and reports. However, once field-based missionaries began to accumulate direct experience with the local cultures, the missionaries themselves were the vast majority of the authors of journal articles.

Missionary reports from the field were accompanied by pictures and photographs, which helped readers visualize the local people and scenes. A case in point is an article titled "Korean Girls" (1888) in *Heathen Woman's Friend*, reported by Mrs. Ella Appenzeller, one of the first Methodist missionaries (1885–1902). Appenzeller offers ethnographic details of the lives led by the local girls and women, sharing her observations about children in Korea as "bright and pretty."¹⁹ She makes particular note of "a girl of perhaps twelve or thirteen, whom I saw with her mother" and reports of learning that "she was not a girl at all, but the wife of the son of the woman" (fig. 2). Appenzeller asks the readers to imagine: "How would you like to leave papa and mamma, and the sweet little baby brothers and sisters, and go to live with some one you had never seen nor heard of, and never go out any more, only in a close-covered box, or in the evening with your mother-in-law? You would not like it at all; neither should I." She deplores the lot of Korean girls, who are destined to comply with the custom of early marriage and domestic seclusion. At the same time, she suggests, a light of hope shines as Mrs. Mary Scranton, a pioneering Methodist missionary, had just opened the "first Korean Sunday-school," where girls aged six to fifteen could learn lessons from the Bible.



Fig. 2. A Korean mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law. From *Heathen Woman's Friend*, 20, no. 2 (1888): 47–48.

Appenzeller specifically profiles some girls as well as adult women in attendance at the Sunday school, including “Patty,” a girl who “was found sick unto death by the roadside.”²⁰ The discourse has progressed from the nameless “heathen” Korean woman of Rice’s essay to the newly converted individual who is specifically referred to using her baptismal Anglo names and can be seen as an example of successful evangelism in Korea.

George Gilmore, another early Methodist missionary in Korea (1886–1889), offers a fascinating portrait of Korean women in his essay, “Social Phases in Korea” (1890) in *Heathen Woman's Friend*.²¹ He includes two images—one is a picture of women ironing clothes, and the other is a picture of a woman making rice cake, or *ttŏk*—in order to provide “a glimpse of women at their household occupations.”²² In the essay, he views the seclusion of Korean women to be “the most noticeable difference between social life in America and Korea.” He notes that this

gendered quarantine is so strictly observed that “a male visitor is met by the master of the house at the entrance, and is entertained in what corresponds to our hall or ante-room, or in the guest-chamber, neither of which permits a view of the rooms where live the mother and daughters.” However, he emphasizes, despite the secluded life of women, “it must not be supposed that the position of woman there is a low one . . . she is treated with respect by the husband. She is spoken to in honorific terms, and her judgment is sought when matters of importance are to be considered.” In an earlier report, Gilmore had pointed out: “The position of woman in Korea is much misunderstood. It has been supposed that they are not held in respect, and are considered the meaner part of the population. This is doubtless a mistake. . . . It is an open secret that Her Majesty has more than a little to say in the conduct of the affairs of the kingdom. Undoubtedly the women of Korea generally are a power in the land.”²³ He echoes Rijutei’s assertion about the moral power of women in the context of Korean culture; however, given the relative isolation that Korean social practices imposed on women, Gilmore regards the matter of greatest urgency facing the mission to be recruiting “more women [missionaries] to work among women.”

Based on his direct contact with local Korean men and women, Gilmore reports a rather surprising reality in which “[Korean] women, after becoming acquainted with us and our ways, have shown no reluctance to meeting gentlemen, and are fond of paying visits to the wives of such foreigners as they know, often manifesting not the slightest embarrassment at being seen even for the first time by strange gentlemen.” One example in point is the wife of his Korean language teacher. After working with Gilmore for three months, the teacher wanted to bring his wife to Gilmore’s home so that she could see how foreigners lived. Gilmore describes her behavior during her first visit to his house: “looking at everything with great enjoyment. She sat at lunch with us, and soon was cracking jokes with great gusto.” More importantly, Gilmore offers an important clue about mission photography in the same essay. He notes that before they left, “she sat with her husband for her picture, which I [Gilmore] took, and a copy of which is now in my album.” The photograph of the couple that Gilmore took is not included in his essay.²⁴ However, his description of the situation provides a glimpse into how Korean subjects were captured by missionaries’ cameras. As Helen Gardner and Jude Philp argue in their article on photography and the Christian mission, the relationship between the missionary photographer and the photographic subject is not a simple one-way connection. Rather photog-

raphy was used to “establish and maintain relations with local people.” More importantly, the agency of the photographic subjects is clear.²⁵ As Gilmore notes, because the Korean teacher had acquired some level of familiarity with foreigners, he was willing to introduce his wife to them and even to pose for a photograph. Without that familiarity, “he [the Korean teacher] would have been shocked and perhaps would not have come near the house again” if Gilmore had asked him to bring his wife for a visit.

As implied in Gilmore’s essay, Koreans were curious about “foreign” lifestyles and the material objects from overseas that could be found in missionary homes, including photographs.²⁶ The introduction to photographs and hand-drawn pictures for most ordinary Koreans came when they first came into contact with missionaries. Susan Doty, an early Presbyterian missionary (1890–1931), describes a typical visit by some Korean women to the missionary residence as follows: “Large numbers of them [Korean women] come to my house as women at home go to the museum. They marvel over the organ, the music-box, sewing machine, foreign chairs, pictures, mirrors and beds. . . . Before they go, I always show them pictures illustrating the life of our Lord, and often give them books and invite them to Sabbath services.”²⁷ Given the language barrier in the encounters between Koreans and American missionaries, pictures would have been useful as a medium for communication. Furthermore, as Doty seems to imply, the pictorial images would serve to pique interest so that people might be motivated to learn more about Christianity. Figure 3 shows a Korean woman convert, a nurse-in-training, sitting in a room filled with Western objects, including an organ, a table, a chair, a lamp, books, and picture frames. A photograph of a male figure hangs prominently in the upper right, and just underneath are three smaller photos of children. In the hallway on the left side one can see another set of photos. This converted Korean woman, wearing typical Korean dress in white, is seated on Western-style furniture in the midst of all these decidedly Western artifacts. Given the rarity of the opportunity to have one’s picture taken at that time, the act of being posed in front of a camera and then seeing a photograph of herself might have given her a feeling of privilege or status. In this way, pictures and photos were among the exotica that attracted Koreans and became another important evangelical tool for missionaries, serving as a medium for introducing and distributing the gospel and for establishing and maintaining relationships with the local people.²⁸ Soon after the working relationship was established, many photographs of newly converted Christians and Bible women were introduced in the



Fig. 3. A woman Christian convert in a missionary's room. The Reverend Corwin & Nellie Taylor Collection, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California.

mission journals along with the stories of their conversions to demonstrate the success of the evangelical effort to bring secluded Korean women out to Christian churches.

The first modern photograph related to Korean women appears in 1892 in *Woman's Work for Woman*, a prominent women's missionary journal of the Presbyterian Church. In her essay, "The Women Who Labor with me in the Gospel," Harriet G. Gale, an early Presbyterian missionary (1885–1908), offers a brief summary of the life paths of the Korean Christian women she worked with, and a group photo is included (fig. 4).²⁹ Gale's perceptive portrayal of each individual woman in the photograph, ranging from a "light-hearted and almost careless, always smiling" woman to a woman who "fears nothing and will talk about the Bible and read it anywhere," helps readers get a glimpse into the background of these women and what personality or inclinations motivated them to seek the new religion despite the difficulty that publicly embracing Christianity could bring at the time.³⁰ Gale's "best and brightest of all is dear old Holmonie [*halmõni*, grandmother]," who is the second from the left in the front row of the photo. Gale describes her first encounter with

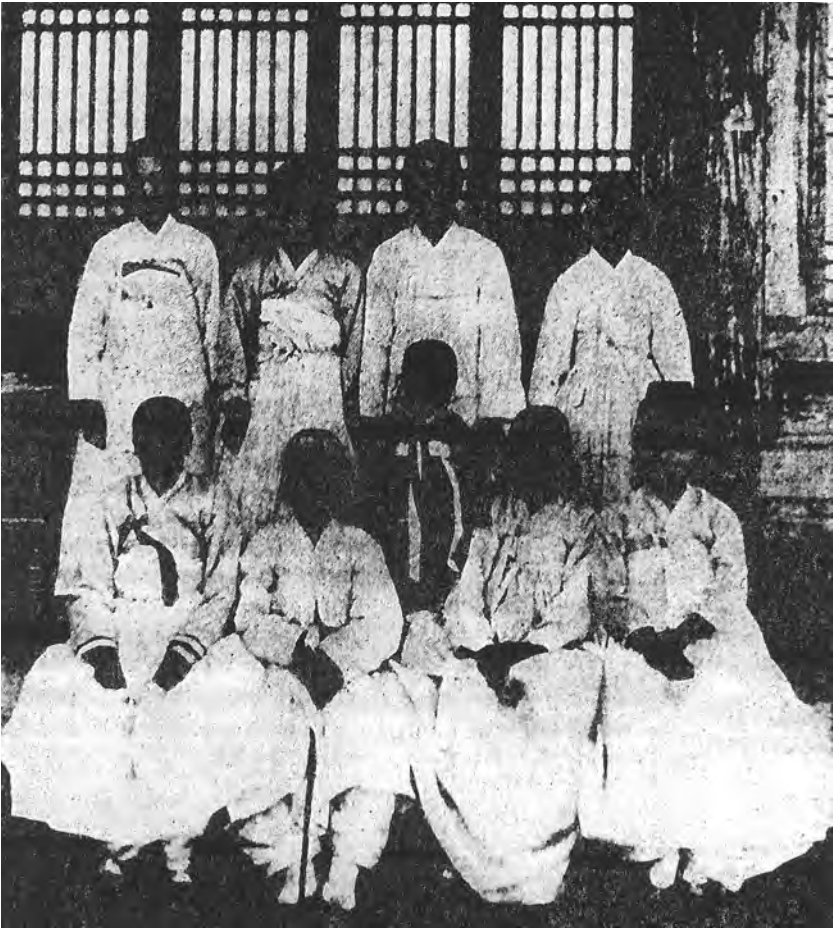


Fig. 4. A group of Korean Christian women. From *Woman's Work for Woman*, 7, no. 8 (1892): 215–17.

Holmonie, noting that “unlike most Koreans, she looked straight into my face and not at my dress, as if to see if I myself were really so different from all the people she had ever known. . . . She came, day after day, caring nothing about the strange [foreign] things she saw, but eagerly devouring chapter after chapter of the Gospel.” In a significant way, this photo succinctly captures the wide range of age groups that were drawn to the new religion. The grandmother Gale introduces here is not an exceptional case. As amply demonstrated in later photos, many elderly women actively worked as Bible women.



Fig. 5. Bible class. The Reverend Corwin & Nellie Taylor Collection, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California.

The growth in the number of new converts was naturally a favorite topic of mission journals, and photographs of those women, both individually and in groups, were frequently showcased (fig. 5). The sheer number of attendants at Bible classes was a point of pride for missionaries. As Mattie Noble, a prominent Presbyterian missionary stationed in P'yongyang (1892–1934), proudly notes in her description of her “Bible Institute,” many local women enthusiastically responded to the opportunity to learn about the new religion and participate in a variety of activities offered by the missionaries. Noble noted that “two hundred and fifteen earnest women and girls” attended a 1906 Bible Institute, and among them “one hundred and eight women walked in from the country, a half to four days’ traveling.”³¹

In addition to the growing number of converts, the success of the evangelical effort was highlighted through the stories of former shamans who had played a significant role as spiritual leaders in old Korea but then converted to Christianity. A case in point is an essay by Blanche Webb Lee (1892–1912), “Christianity’s Message to Woman” (1897), with a photo of a Korean female shaman (fig. 6).³² Lee introduces the



Fig. 6. A Korean female shaman. From *Woman's Work for Woman*, 12, no. 5 (1897): 120.

shaman who “has been a servant of Satan” for more than fifty years and “by her lies and wickedness won much money and did much evil.” The caption of the photo reads: “This one by posing before the camera with all her appliances for divination about her plainly exhibits the money-making character of her calling. At Christmas service (1896) in Pyeng Yang, 400 to 500 people were present and heard short talks from three converts: I.—A Former blind sorceress. II.—A devil exorcist. III.—A grave-site diviner.” One former shaman pledged, “I consecrate myself and all I have to God’s service. I mean to go back and teach the women of Whang Hai Province about Jesus.” This type of photograph and story sent a powerful message to the readers at home that shamanistic practices, emblematic of the ultimate form of “paganism” in the eyes of missionaries and Westerners, would be defeated by Christianity, a triumph of missionary labor and evidence in their minds of the superiority of their religion.³³

The mission journals were produced largely for the consumption of the audience at home.³⁴ Missionary discourse accompanied by photographs and pictures provided an effective medium for demonstrating what missionaries in the field had accomplished and thus served as a crucial medium for fund-raising activities at home that would help secure financial resources that could be channeled into the mission field so that

missionaries could continue to carry out their goal of “saving” the pagan. Bishop David Moore succinctly dramatizes the effective use of the mission journal as a conduit for fund-raising. He writes: “Alas, for the woman of Korea! Until the Gospel crowns her, she is nothing and nameless. Christ’s love in her heart, the missionary’s hand in holy baptism upon her head, and she goes forth as ‘Salome,’ ‘Martha’ or ‘Mary,’ a new and glorified creation. And it requires but thirty-six dollars, gold, to support a Bible-woman for a year! My American sisters, is this the ‘open door’ you are seeking?”³⁵ The formerly nameless “heathen” woman bears her newly acquired Western baptismal name in a photograph that clearly individuates her as a tangible, visible, and transformed being. In this vein, photographs added a more vivid and presumably “realistic” portrayal of the local people and culture with the marked sense of pride on the part of missionaries for their success.

The Body as a Marker of “the Other”

In foreign mission fields throughout the world, the body and the state of dress (or undress) of the local people served as one of the most tantalizing points for understanding the stark differences between the Eurocentric notion of civilization and the primitiveness and savagery of “the Other.” Especially the *lack* of clothing on the “natives” was a constant source of disgust and fascination among Western colonialists, travelers, and missionaries.³⁶ It is important to note that while local women’s bodies and their lack of clothing were often framed by the particular worldview and gender practices that Westerners embraced, they also shed light on the ways in which the body—physical, cultural, and societal—was a site of “intervention or inscriptive surface” on which bodily norms and values are newly inscribed or refuted through the transcultural encounters.³⁷ Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton propose that “the body-as-contact-zone is a powerful analytical term . . . precisely because it allows us to navigate the dynamic relationship between representation and ‘reality’ and to see the work of mediation that embodied subjects perform between the domestic and the foreign, the quotidian and the cyclical, the dynamic and the static.”³⁸

Some of the most remarkable photographs that illustrate “the body-as-contact-zone” theme were those photographs that showed Korean women with their breasts exposed. The design and fashion of women’s clothing in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century was typically an extremely short jacket, which reached down to just under the armpit,



Fig. 7. A Korean family in the street. General Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.

and a long skirt that wrapped around the breasts. Given the style, it was very easy to see the gap between the jacket and skirt if a woman lifted her arms to steady something she was carrying on her head. Figure 7 provides an illustration in point. It is a snapshot taken in the street. A family—husband, wife, and children—are on a trip. In this photo, the woman is carrying a basket on her head and steadying it with her right hand, which has resulted in her jacket being lifted so that her breasts are exposed. From the viewpoint of the American missionaries, who held the Victorian, Protestant, white-middle-class norms and sensibilities of their time, the “private” body should be properly covered in public, and what they saw in the street was beyond the bounds of acceptable bodily presentation.³⁹ Annie Baird, a prolific Presbyterian missionary (1891–1916), vividly describes a scene where an American woman from Kentucky was so upset at the sight of the exposed breasts of a Korean woman in the street that she tried to pull the Korean woman’s top jacket and skirt to cover the breasts but to no avail.⁴⁰

What is significant in fig. 7 is that while the “exposed” body signified a pagan condition from the Western point of view, the “exposure” itself does not seem to even register in the minds of the subjects of the

photograph. The woman's facial expression and, more importantly, her husband's smiling at the camera, make it amply clear that they are not embarrassed or even aware that the display of her breasts could be seen as improper. Here one can see the dynamics involved in the interpretation of dress and the body in the contact zone. In this case, the unwittingly revealed "private" body of the subject was captured by the "public" eyes of the missionary photographer that were trained to read the body and dress in a particular way.⁴¹ In many candid photographs of this type taken in the street⁴² and even in some of the *posed* photographs of local women,⁴³ the photographer's aim was to capture an embodiment of "paganism" in the women's "indecent" displays of their bodies and portray them as objects to be civilized, while the Korean subjects often cast a seemingly blank stare at the never-before-seen exotic device in the hands of the foreigner.

It is noteworthy that these types of sensational photographs from Korea were not printed in mission journals. This is not to say that such photographs were unusual in the Korea mission field. Many photographs of women in states of partial undress in Korea are preserved in mission archives in the folders of individual missionaries. One might also argue that such photographs might have prompted a sense of urgency in the readers of mission journals at home about the need to "rescue heathen women" from a "profound spiritual hazard" and civilize them with an appropriate sense of modesty and thereby prompt greater support.⁴⁴ Indeed, these journals did reproduce images of naked or half-naked "pagan" women from missions in other parts of the world to show the success the mission had had in converting "wild" or "cannibal" natives.⁴⁵ However, the mission journals did not include such photographs of Korean women. One clue as to why such photographs did not appear in mission journals might be that the missionaries came to be aware of the class distinctions among women of Korea in terms of their dress code and thus avoided oversimplifying the world of women in Korea. More seasoned and perceptive missionaries and travelers understood dress to be a marker of social classes in Korea. In his book, *Chosön, the Land of Morning Calm*, published in 1885, Percival Lowell describes women's clothing in Korea and notes that the unexpected exposure of breasts might be found only among women of the commoner class when they carry water in a pot on their head.⁴⁶ Huldah Haenig, a Methodist missionary (1910–1915), illustrates the common scene of the women in Korea on the streets, noting that "[m]any of the grown and married women . . . shield themselves from the public gaze by the green coat thrown over head and shoulders. . . . Not all women, however, are able to guard their



Fig. 8. A Korean woman ready for church. From *Woman's Work for Woman*, 38, no. 3 (1906): 83.

modesty so. Babies astride their backs, heavy burdens on their heads, and all too scanty clothing, are everywhere seen to be a common lot of the women.”⁴⁷ Indeed, missionaries often saw “proper” Korean women, especially young unmarried ones, cover their bodies with long-sleeved clothing in the public space to “shield themselves from the public gaze” (fig. 8).⁴⁸ In addition, women of the upper class, who did not have to

engage in physical labor such as carrying baggage or water, were always represented in their fine clothing posed with great dignity.

Awareness of class distinctions became a crucial component in developing the mission's strategies for approaching women of different social classes and envisioning what constituted ideal or proper bodily presentation in the public space within the Korean cultural context. As Philippa Levine aptly points out, "What constitutes a state of unclottedness is fluid and unstable—a historical problem, a problem of spatiality and of temporality."⁴⁹ In her analysis of the secularization of the breast in Western art, Margaret Miles argues that the "exposed breast" of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus was a powerful religious icon; however, it was eventually transformed from "a religious symbol" to an erotic and medical sign over the course of the early modern period in Western Europe.⁵⁰ Numerous paintings depict mother and child in Western art, and the Madonna has been a central figure. For example, in Joos van Cleve's *Virgin and Child* (1525), the Virgin's breast figures prominently in the portrait, with the child closing its eyes and touching his mother's breast in profound comfort.⁵¹ The bodily function of a mother nursing and comforting a child is aesthetically and culturally constructed as beautiful, even sacred. However, the distinction between the body of a *mother* nourishing her child and the body of an eroticized or *pagan woman* is crucial here. The bare breast is readily justified when it serves a maternal or religious end, while it can invite social condemnation if it is interpreted as a mark of promiscuity or pagan practice.

In this vein, one of the most fascinating interpretations of Korean women's presentations of their bodies, especially the exposure of the breasts, is that of Annie Baird, a veteran missionary woman of the Presbyterian church. She offers her own cultural interpretation that the exposure of women's breasts should not be understood solely from a Western viewpoint. Rather, she argues, it should be understood in relation to the status and role of Korean women within the particular cultural context of Korea. That is, being a mother is the ultimate role and duty of Korean women. It provides them with power and authority. Fulfilling one's motherly duties, including nursing, is so important that women's clothing is designed to make this maternal function easy and efficient.⁵² Baird makes the point that, because this duty is understood to be first and foremost for a woman in Korean culture, it removes any sexual connotation from the image of the mother's body. In other words, by emphasizing these maternal functions, she succeeds in de-sexualizing the body of woman and in turn presenting woman as the site of nurturing and care for the future of the society. While ordinary Korean women's bare breasts in the street stirred



Fig. 9. Taegu women's Bible class, 1917. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Western missionaries' sensibility in the beginning, nursing a child in public must have been understood by missionaries as a standard practice in Korean society. In a 1917 portrait of a Bible class in Taigu (Taegu), a woman in the lower left front row (in the rectangle) is nursing her child with her breast slightly exposed (fig. 9). What the picture suggests is that breastfeeding in public was something that was done commonly without any self-consciousness or embarrassment. This natural and matter-of-fact pose of the breastfeeding woman in front of a camera also manifests missionaries' compliance to such local practice.

In a significant way, this staged picture is a classic example that demonstrates the success of evangelical work, showing undeniable "progress" from "heathen" to Christian civilization. The sheer size of the class is an obvious reflection of this. Moreover, the picture illustrates the shifting horizon of society from the old to the new by centering on the larger, more imposing Western-style building—a church—as a symbol of Western modernity and locating the old, traditional Korean house off to the side. While women of old Korea largely remained illiterate, many of the girls and women in this Bible class are holding the Bible, signifying their literacy. The top jacket that many of the women are wearing is significantly longer than was the style in earlier times, suggesting some form of dress reform.⁵³ In addition, a few women (circled in the picture), who are likely to be leaders of the Bible class, are wearing a "modern"

hairstyle, which became popular in the 1920s. In this way, many of the images contained in this picture suggest ongoing changes in the notion of proper space and bodily presentation of women in Korea. Yet, the simultaneous existence of a church member who was openly breastfeeding in front of the camera succinctly shows the extent to which the missionary efforts in “civilizing missions” were inscribed but at the same time negotiated in the face of the local cultural particularities regarding what are the acceptable limits of bodily presentations in public.

The Bible Women and Women Missionaries

The majority of photographic representations about the “progress” in the mission field focused on Bible women. The importance of Bible women in the mission field cannot be overemphasized. Lulu Frey, a teacher at Ewha Girls’ School (1893–1920), declared that “the Bible Woman seemed to be regarded as the most important factor in the work among the Korean women of Korea. Since they know what Korean women are and what they experience in their lives, the bible woman can approach other Korean women more effectively with great sympathy.”⁵⁴ In addition to their easy and direct contact with Korean women, the Bible woman was “a good model for the rest of women because the bible woman is able to read the Bible (all except a very few had learned to read).”⁵⁵ Becoming literate was one of the requirements to be appointed as a Bible woman.⁵⁶ Given the exceedingly low literacy rate at the time, the prospect of learning how to read served as an attractive factor in recruiting future Christians. As Nellie Pierce Miller, a Methodist missionary (1897–1937), noted, some of her new students at her Bible school attended the school “simply because they want to study.”⁵⁷ Figure 10 gives us a glimpse of students attending Bible classes and what was taught in Bible classes. The open books and the content on the blackboard demonstrate that Bible classes provided instruction in numeracy and literacy, which were not a small attraction for Korean women. Indeed, the rather happy faces of two Korean women in the front row subtly but powerfully convey the meaning of attending Bible classes. Becoming a Bible woman was more than simply becoming a devoted Christian. It was an opportunity to learn and earn income. Missionaries preferred to train widows as Bible women because those women did not have as many family obligations as others and could devote themselves to the evangelical work full-time.⁵⁸ In addition, widows had particularly low status in Korea, and thus the chance to become a Bible woman must have been a welcome opportunity to have a



Fig. 10. A Bible training class in P'yŏngyang. Norman Thorpe Collection.

distinct identity other than as widow and, perhaps more importantly, to gain some level of financial independence as they were paid for their work. These full-time Bible women provided crucial assistance to missionary women in the proliferation of evangelical work, especially in small villages away from the city centers. While the evangelical task was the priority in the work of the Bible women, they also engaged in the reform of old habits and customs. For instance, some gave up side businesses selling wine because they were told that Christians should not engage in such activity.⁵⁹ A Bible woman named Abigail, who had at one time been a concubine, left her man after she converted to Christianity.⁶⁰ As noted earlier, the stories of converted shamans (*mudang*) also provided particularly powerful examples for showing the “superiority” of Christianity, given the centuries of influence shamanism had in Korea.⁶¹

Many missionaries—both women and men—expressed gratitude for the exceptional contribution of Bible women to the evangelical work. Nellie Pierce Miller talked about her experience in training Bible women as something that gave her “exceeding joy and satisfaction.”⁶² In her description of her Bible woman, Martha Pak, N.M.S. Hall MacRae, an Australian Presbyterian missionary (1915–1940), says she considers Pak to be “truly my dear friend and fellow worker as if her skin had been white and her language my native tongue . . . I think of her earnestness, her charming personality, and untiring zeal in the Master’s service.”⁶³



Fig. 11. Chemulpo Bible Institute group. The Reverend Corwin & Nellie Taylor Collection, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California.

There is no doubt that the relationship between missionaries and Bible women began as teacher-student and was thus a hierarchical one with the American missionary in the dominant position and the Korean woman in the subordinate role. That hierarchy is enacted in fig. 11, in which a missionary teacher sits on a chair while her Korean students sit on the ground, and the image of the missionary as a guide/teacher to Korean women is heightened by the attentive gazes of the Korean students. At the same time, one can also see the congenial and collaborative relationship between the missionaries and Korean women played out in images like fig. 12. In this photo, Gertrude Snively, a Methodist missionary (1906–1940), sits in the center and Blanche Bair (1913–1938)⁶⁴ at one end of a semicircle. Snively was the senior missionary and Bair the junior in training. The fact that Bair is part of the “student” group in the composition of this photo and that everyone can see each other suggests a different dimension in the missionary-Korean relationship—a more interactive, mutual, open, and less hierarchical relationship. To be sure, Snively still sets herself apart by wearing a modern-style hat while all the



Fig. 12. Gertrude Snavelly and her Bible class. General Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey.

other women have bare heads, and by taking a position at the center she is presented as the leader of the group. Yet, there is no distance between the missionaries and the Korean women. Indeed, the physical closeness (their knees seem to be touching) suggests a dynamic more like that of a peer group than a hierarchical teacher-student group. The Korean woman to the immediate right of Snavelly casts a gentle, downward gaze at the Bible Snavelly is holding. Her subtle smile can be interpreted as a quiet manifestation of the satisfying and comfortable relationship between them.

A more direct and intimate contact between missionaries and Korean Bible women is illustrated in fig. 13, in which Louise McCully (the first person on the left in the second row), the first woman missionary sent to Korea by the Woman's Missionary Society of the Canadian Presbyterian Church (1900–1934), is holding hands with Ch'oe Maria (the second from the left in the front row), a Korean Bible woman. McCully was originally sent to China, but at the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, she found refuge in Wönsan, Korea. Upon arriving in Korea in 1901, McCully “quickly proved herself to be an indefatigable evangelistic worker and champion of women’s place within the church.”⁶⁵ The relationship she had with Ch'oe Maria through Bible classes and evangelical



Fig. 13. An example of intimate contact between missionaries and Korean Bible women is seen in the clasped hands of Louise McCully, at left in second row, and Ch'oe Maria. From Helen F. MacRae, *A Tiger on Dragon Mountain: The Life of Rev. Duncan M. MacRae, D.D.* (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island: A. J. Haslam, 1993), 150.

activities for women lasted more than three decades. Ch'oe was one of the most active Bible women in the region of Hamhŭng. It is claimed that she was the first Korean woman converted to Christianity in Hamhŭng. She began to teach Korean and Chinese characters to children when there was no school in the region. This initial instruction offered by Ch'oe ultimately led to the establishment of Yŏngsaeng Girls' School.⁶⁶

The photographs of Korean Bible women and American women missionaries complement our understanding of their shared lot and aspirations not only for their religious faith but also for their careers and independent lives. For Korean women, it was in mission schools and Sunday schools that they received literacy training for the first time. It was also mission organizations that began to offer job opportunities for Korean women as Bible women, school teachers, and nurses. Career opportunities such as these were rare for women at the time. In this way, conversion to Christianity opened up unprecedented opportunities for Korean girls and women in pursuing higher education and professional careers. Similarly, the foreign mission enterprise provided relatively well-educated women in the West with an unprecedented opportunity to

fulfill their religious and professional ambitions within the “woman’s work for woman” by working as missionaries overseas.⁶⁷ Despite the exceptional opportunities both Korean women and women missionaries had in the mission field, as many research studies have demonstrated, both missionary women and Korean Bible women were significantly constrained by a patriarchal church structure that institutionalized gender inequality, which is evidenced in the lack of women in leadership positions, a wide salary gap between men and women workers, and the overall subordinate status of women.⁶⁸ The fact that women have long been overlooked or sidelined in the historiography manifests the vastly unequal treatment of women in church history in Korea and the West.⁶⁹ These photographs offer a glimpse of their interdependent and shared lives as women who still had to confront the patriarchal organization of church and family and constantly engage in negotiations between the old and the new and between indigenous and foreign ideas and practices.

Conclusion

Photography is often understood as a “scientific” and “trustworthy” reflection of the objects and people captured by the modern instrument, the camera. However, those images captured by the camera are also an expression of a “dynamic field of aesthetic and social relations and contestations.”⁷⁰ What I have intended in this article is to explore the politics of missionary photography concerning the “objective” and “subjective” projection of images from the Korea mission field—the interplay between “truth-telling” and the “missionary desire” to convey success stories. When tracing the early pictorial images *in relation to* missionary writings, one can readily detect the prevailing worldview in mission photographs that portrays Western and Christian civilization as superior to non-Western societies. However, those photographs also reveal fluid and dynamic interactions between the missionaries and the missionized. Understanding local cultural particularities was both challenging and beneficial to missionaries in approaching and converting local people. The awareness of class distinctions and gender practices in Korea, especially among veteran missionaries, helped them gain better rapport with the locals. The photographs published in mission journals or donated to mission archives reflect these dynamic interactions.

Given the sheer paucity of Korean women’s voices in the writing that survives to today, missionary photography also offers a rare glimpse of this group whose lives and history have largely been overlooked in the history



Fig. 14. A postcard from Korea (1903). From Kwön Hyökhüi, *Chosŏn esŏ on sajin yŏpsŏ* [Postcards from Korea] (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 2005), 87.

of Korean Christianity. To be sure, Korean women converts were not the photographers who could shape, frame, or emphasize certain aspects of their photographic subjects; however, being posed for the camera is not a completely passive activity. Reflecting on his own experience, Roland Barthes argues that “once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of ‘posing,’ I instantaneously make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image.”⁷¹ In other words, the imminent situation of being captured by the camera can create a moment to “constitute” oneself. In this vein, regardless of the intention of the photographer, the Korean women more readily come to the viewers. Accompanied by particular material culture, they reveal both expected and sometimes unexpected gestures and expressions. It is these unexpected, surprising details of the images that shed light on the depth and complexity of the interactions between Korean women and American women missionaries in the contact zone.

The visual embodiment of Korean women in missionary publications changed over time from a nameless, generic figure to a named (often baptized), contextualized individual and from someone who needed to be rescued from heathenism to an indispensable co-worker in spreading the gospel. Missionary photography encapsulates the dynamic changes in



Fig. 15. Ewa, the protagonist of W. Arthur Noble's novel *Ewa: A Tale of Korea* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1906), frontispiece.

the Korea mission field, recording not only the simplistic (sometimes mistaken) first impressions but also the highly sophisticated knowledge of Korea that came as missionaries gained more nuanced insights into the intricate cultural and social network in Korea. It often sheds light on the multidirectional interactions between missionaries and Korean women, who found both difficulties in negotiating a different mode of thinking and behavior and opportunities for their own pursuit of evangelical goals or a new sphere of life.

Missionary photography is an expedient analytical tool that adds to our understanding of the dynamic field of the Korea mission because certain visual representations of people or societies overlap with the myriad of material and institutional cultures as well as overt and covert human desires.⁷² It tends to open up new areas of research that can fruitfully



Fig. 16. Widely circulated postcard image of a Korean woman entertainer (*kisaeng*). From Yi Kyöngmin, *Kisaeng ün öttök'e mandüro chyönnün'ga: kündae kisaeng üi t'ansaeng kwa p'josang konggan* [How was the kisaeng created: The birth of the modern kisaeng and the representational space] (Seoul: Sajin Ak'aibu Yön'guso), 46–47.

link the study of Korean Christianity and American missionaries in Korea with a broader cultural and social history of modern Korea. For example, although it is beyond the scope of this article and thus not dealt with here, future research studies may explore the intersections of missionary photography and Korean commercial photographic industries. Just as missionaries amassed photos of Korean people, nature, and artifacts for their audience at home, so did Koreans represent Korean customs and people for the viewers overseas. Missionaries borrowed or appropriated some of the commercially successful postcards in their depiction of Korean women. To mention a couple of examples, fig. 8 was originally a postcard produced in 1903 and sent to Paris. The photo was meant to show a typical Korean

woman with *changot*, a body-covering cloth that women used as a sign of proper woman when they were in public space. The same photo, however, was titled, “Ready for Church,” when it was published in a mission journal in 1906 (fig. 14). Another example is found in a book titled *Ewa: A Tale of Korea*, authored by W. Arthur Noble.⁷³ The author includes what is supposed to be a photo of the female protagonist of the novel (fig. 15). However, the image is actually one of the most widely circulated *kisaeng* (woman entertainer) postcards (fig. 16), and Ewa is not a *kisaeng* in the story.⁷⁴ Modern photographs produced for commercial purposes were deployed by Koreans and then appropriated by missionaries.

This article is intended as an exploratory attempt to emphasize the role of missionary photography as a rich reservoir in enhancing our understanding of Christian mission history by deploying both discursive and visual materials and interpreting the tensions between the two as well as complementary roles. Photographic images can serve as a powerful supplement, or perhaps an alternative, to missionary discourse as they reveal what is visible, obvious, and intended but also hidden, ambiguous, and unintended.

Notes

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to two reviewers for their insightful comments that helped me clarify and strengthen my argument. The present article is based on a paper I presented at the Association for Asian Studies in 2009. I would like to thank Donald Clark for inviting me to join the panel to explore the topic of missionary photography. Timothy Lee, as the discussant of the panel, provided me with astute comments that enabled me to rethink some of the major issues. Lastly, I greatly benefited from a highly stimulating discussion with Nancy Abelmann and graduate students at the University of Illinois during a visit to their campus.

1. Donald N. Clark, ed., *Missionary Photography in Korea: Encountering the West through Christianity* (New York: The Korea Society, 2009), 6.

2. Some recent studies incorporate missionary photography into their analysis. See Clark, *Missionary Photography in Korea*. Sung Deuk Oak compiles a large number of missionary photographs to introduce the history of the Great Revival movement in Korea, which culminated in 1907. See *Hanbando tae puhŭng: sajin ūro ponŭn han'guk kyohoe, 1900–1910* [The Great Revival in Korea: A pictorial history of Korean Protestant Christianity] (Seoul: Hongsŏngsa, 2009). In addition, there have been growing efforts to digitalize missionary photographs and make them available for the public to view on the Internet. Examples include the University of Southern California's The Reverend Corwin & Nellie Taylor Collection (<http://www.usc.edu/libraries/archives/arc/libraries/eastasian/>

korea/resources/kda-taylor.html) and the American Theological Library Association's Cooperative Digital Resources Initiative (<http://www.atla.com/cdri/cdri.html>).

3. Two mission archives are the major source of missionary photography for this article. One is the General Commission on Archives and History (GCAH), The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. GCAH holds more than two thousand photographs with the originals well-preserved, and photocopies of the originals are available for viewing. The other is the Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS), Philadelphia. The photographs at the PHS are arranged in folders indexed either by the individual missionary or by relevant subject matter. I chose these two archives because the Methodist and Presbyterian denominations constituted the majority of the Protestant Christian missions in Korea. In addition, missionary journals (Methodist and Presbyterian), online digital photos (Cooperative Digital Resources Initiative), and secondary book sources are also used.

4. Helen Gardner and Jude Philp, "Photography and Christian Mission: George Brown's Images of the New Britain Mission 1875–80," *The Journal of Pacific History*, 41, no. 2 (September 2006): 176.

5. A photo of "Pioneer Protestant Missionaries," Seoul, 1887, William Elliot Griffis Collection, Rutgers University. Cited from Clark, *Missionary Photography in Korea*, 68–69.

6. When Mary F. Scranton, the first woman missionary in Korea, began to report her work from Korea, she included a picture of Ewha Hakdang (Ewha Girls' School). In this way missionaries accompanied photos of the institutions or people they worked for. Mary Scranton, "I Hoa Haktan, Seoul, Korea," *Heathen Woman's Friend*, 20, no. 7 (January 1889): 173–74. Aside from sending photos to the mission journals, individual missionaries amassed large collections of photographs in their own albums, some of which were sent to their family members, church organizations, or mission archives after retirement.

7. One of the rare literary pieces to vividly convey the voices of early Christian women can be found in a book titled *Victorious Lives of Early Christians in Korea: The First Book of Biographies and Autobiographies of Early Christians in the Protestant Church in Korea* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 1927). The book was edited by Mattie Noble, a Methodist missionary stationed in P'yŏngyang, and was written in Korean. Its Korean title is *Sŭgni ūi saenghwal*.

8. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 9–10.

9. David Morgan and Sally Promey, ed., *Visual Culture of American Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 16.

10. Some recent studies shed light on the rich history of Christian women in Korea. See Gari Ledyard, "Kollumba Kang Wansuk, an Early Catholic Activist and Martyr," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert Buswell Jr. and Timothy Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 38–71; Donald Clark, "Mothers, Daughters, Biblewomen, and

Sisters: An Account of 'Women's Work' in the Korea Mission Field," in *Christianity in Korea*, 167–92; Kelly Chong, *Deliverance and Submission: Evangelical Women and the Negotiation of Patriarchy in South Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Hyaewol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

11. Yi Paeyong in cooperation with Son Sünghüi, Mun Sukchae, and Cho Kyöngwön, "Han'guk kidokkyo yösöng kyoyuk üi söngkwa wa chönmang—Ewha yöja taehakkyo rül chungsim üro" [Accomplishment and prospect of Korean Christian education for women—With focus on Ewha Womans University], *Ewha sahak yön'gu*, 27 (2000): 9–36; Kang Sönmi, "Chosön p'agyön yö sön'gyosa wa (kidok) yösöng üi yösöngjuüi üisik hyöngsöng" [Women missionaries sent to Korea and the formation of feminist consciousness among Christian women] (Ph.D. diss., Ewha Womans University, 2003); Insook Kwon, "'The New Women's Movement' in 1920s Korea: Rethinking the Relationship between Imperialism and Women," *Gender and History*, 10, no. 3 (November 1998): 381–405; Clark, "Mothers, Daughters, Biblewomen, and Sisters."

12. In my work, I underscore the complexity in the nature of "new" and "modern" gender ideology, which has been presumed to have been shaped by American women missionaries, through an examination of what constituted "the modern" in missionary discourse and institutional engagements. See Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea*; Hyaewol Choi, "'Wise Mother, Good Wife': A Trans-cultural Discursive Construct in Modern Korea," *Journal of Korean Studies*, 14, no. 1 (2009): 1–34.

13. Kathleen Canning, "The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History," *Gender and History*, 11, no. 3 (November 1999): 499–513.

14. *The Heathen Woman's Friend* continued under the new title, *Woman's Missionary Friend* (1896–1940). The new title came about after it was decided that the word "heathen" was derogatory.

15. Yi Kwangnin, *Kaehwäp'a wa kaehwa sasang yön'gu* [Study of the Enlightenment group and its thought] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1989), 43–62.

16. "A Call from Corea," *Heathen Woman's Friend*, 16, no. 7 (January 1885): 158–59.

17. "A Woman of Korea," *Heathen Woman's Friend*, 17, no. 8 (February 1886): 182.

18. "A Woman of Korea," 182–83.

19. Mrs. Ella Appenzeller, "Korean Girls," *Heathen Woman's Friend*, 20, no. 2 (August 1888): 47–48.

20. In the beginning of the mission, it was difficult to recruit Korean girls and women to church or mission schools, largely because of the "inside outside rule" (*naeoeböpp*) that prevented older girls and young women from being seen in public and also due to the widespread, unflattering rumors about Westerners. As a result, the early converts and students at mission schools tended to be orphans or come from impoverished families. See Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea*, 90–91.

21. Geo. W. Gilmore, "Social Phrases in Korea," *Heathen Woman's Friend*, 22, no. 1 (July 1890): 3–5.
22. Gilmore, "Social Phrases in Korea."
23. Geo. W. Gilmore, "Two Interrogations Answered about Korea," *Woman's Work for Woman and Our Mission Field*, 4, no. 9 (1889): 237–38. "Her Majesty" refers to Empress Myōngsōng, also known as Queen Min.
24. While the exact explanation is unknown, part of the reason why Gilmore did not include the photo of the couple might be related to the high expense or technological limitations involved in publishing photographs in the journal at that time. However, situations greatly changed from the 1890s when a large number of modern photographs began to appear in mission journals.
25. Gardner and Philp, "Photography and Christian Mission," 175.
26. Sadie Welbon, "Foreign Woman's Evangelistic Work in City and Country," *Korea Mission Field*, 6, no. 10 (1910): 259–61.
27. "Korea," *Woman's Work for Woman and Our Mission Field*, 4, no. 12 (1889): 329.
28. W. J. Hall, "Pioneer Missionary Work in the Interior of Korea," *Gospel in All Lands* (July, 1894): 331–32; Rosetta Sherwood Hall, "Kwang Hya Nyo Won or Woman's dispensary of extended grace," Annual Meeting of the Woman's Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Korea (Seoul, May 13–19, 1899), 14–18; Mary Hillman, "Evangelistic Work and Day School, West Korea District," Annual Meeting of the Woman's Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Korea (Pyeng Yang, May 6–21, 1902), 20–21.
29. Harriet G. Gale, "The Women who Labor with me in the Gospel," *Woman's Work for Woman*, 7, no. 8 (August 1892): 215–17.
30. Chōn Samdōk, "Nae saenghwal ūi yangnyōk" [History of my life], in *Victorious Lives of Early Christians in Korea*, 12.
31. Mattie Wilcox Noble, "A Bible Institute in Korea," *Woman's Missionary Friend*, 38, no. 11 (November 1906): 399–400.
32. Blanche Webb Lee, "Christianity's Message to Woman," *Woman's Work for Woman*, 12, no. 5 (1897): 119–20.
33. L. A. Miller, "The Conversion of a Sorceress," *Korea Mission Field*, 2 (February 1906): 65.
34. A quotation cited in *Korea Mission Field* in 1908 reads, "The crux of the missionary question, as far as it relates to Korea, is not here on the field but is at home, on the threshold of the church in America. No obstacle appears ahead of us to prevent the saving of hundreds of thousands of Koreans. It is only a question of whether the church at home will make good the opportunity which has been given her of God—to bestow upon one nation, during this generation, the priceless boon of becoming Christian in its national and individual life." *Korea Mission Field*, 4 (March 1908): 1.

35. Bishop David H. Moore, "Slavery in Korea," *Woman's Missionary Friend*, 35, no. 9 (September 1903): 319.

36. Philippa Levine argues that "Any investigation of unclothedness in a British context must, however, begin with Christianity, which has had much to say on the topic of the unclothed body. Missionaries working in colonial sites looked upon colonial undress as a profound spiritual hazard. The three 'c's of Christianity, civilization, and clothing were surely as important in the missionary ethos." Philippa Levine, "States of Undress: Nakedness and the Colonial Imagination," *Victorian Studies*, 50, no. 2 (2008): 191.

37. Canning, "The Body as Method?," 500–506.

38. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, "Postscripts: Bodies, Genders, Empires: Reimagining World Histories," in *Bodies in Contact*, ed. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005), 407. The notion of "contact zone" Ballantyne and Burton use is drawn from Mary Louise Pratt's definition of contact zone as "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict." Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

39. Ryu Taeyöng, *Ch'ögi miguk son'gyosa yön'gu: 1884–1910* [Early American missionaries in Korea: 1884–1910] (Seoul: Han'guk kidokkyo yoksa yön'guso, 2001). In this book Ryu provides detailed stories about the middle-class background of American missionaries who came to Korea.

40. Annie Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1913), 18–19.

41. Dress scholar Carole Turbin notes that "(b)ecause dress is not a simple cultural expression of society or individuals but a form of visual and tactile communication linked to the body, self, and communication, it is paradoxical and double-edged, both public and private, individual and social." Carole Turbin, "Refashioning the Concept of Public/Private: Lessons from Dress Studies," *Journal of Women's History*, 15, no. 1 (2003): 45.

42. Chöng Sönghüi, *Chosön üi söng p'ungsok* [Sexual culture in the Chosön dynasty] (Seoul: Karam kihak, 1998), 244; Cho Hüijin, *Sönbi wa p'ösing* [Literary scholar and piercing] (Seoul: TongAsia, 2003), 71–86.

43. Blanche Stevens' folder at Yenching Library, Harvard University. In this folder, a number of photos are included, donated by Jim Carlson in Virginia. One of the photos is a picture of lower-class women—three young adult women and one old woman whose breasts were exposed. They were standing in a row, looking straight into the camera. They look as if they were asked to pose in that way.

44. Levine, "States of Undress," 191.

45. Joseph H. Reading, "Fangwe Cannibals," *Woman's Work for Woman and Our*

Mission Field, 4, no. 6 (June 1889): 149; “The Indians of Brazil,” *Woman’s Work for Woman and Our Mission Field*, 4, no. 11 (November 1889): 294.

46. Percival Lowell, *Chosön, the Land of the Morning Calm* [Nae kiök sok üü Chosön, Chosön saramdül], trans. Cho Kyöngch’öl (Seoul: Yedam, 2001), 259. See also J. Devika, *En-Gendering Individuals: The Language of Re-forming in Twentieth Century Keralam* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2007), 253–91.

47. Huldah A. Haenig, “From West Gate to East Gate,” *Woman’s Missionary Friend*, 43, no. 1 (January 1911): 9–11.

48. Minerva L. Guthapfel, “How They Come Into the Kingdom,” *Woman’s Missionary Friend*, 38, no. 3 (March 1906): 81–84.

49. Levine, “States of Undress,” 190.

50. Margaret Miles, *A Complex Delight: The Secularization of the Breast 1350–1759* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

51. Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 37.

52. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life*, 18–19.

53. Some leading Korean intellectuals made critical comments on the traditional dress style and wanted to reform it to make it more practical and hygienic. Kim Wönju, for example, proposed a dress reform to correct the reality in which unmarried women tended to compress their breasts too much by wrapping their skirts around them tightly, and other women especially in the countryside carelessly allowed their breasts to be exposed although not intentionally. She made a point that such scenes were embarrassing, particularly for foreigners. See her article, “Puin üibok kaeryang e taehan üigyön” [Thoughts on the women’s dress reform], *Tonga ilbo* 10 through 14 September 1921. Cited from Kim Iryöp, *Chaet pit chöksam e sarang üü mutko* [Burying love under the ash-colored jacket], ed. Kim Sangbae (Seoul: Sol moe, 1982), 221–26.

54. Lulu Frey, “The Bible Woman,” *Korea Mission Field*, 3, no. 2 (1907): 42.

55. Frey, “The Bible Woman,” 42.

56. Kate Cooper, “The Bible Woman,” *The Korea Magazine* (January 1917): 6–10.

57. *Woman’s Missionary Friend*, 37, no. 8 (August 1905): 291.

58. Cooper, “The Bible Woman,” 7.

59. Mrs. A. F. Robb, “Our Bible Woman, Dorcas,” *Korea Mission Field*, 3, no. 1 (January 1907): 6.

60. Lillian Nicholas, “The Story of a Bible Woman,” *Korea Mission Field*, 8, no. 7 (July 1912): 207.

61. Miller, “The Conversion of a Sorceress,” 65.

62. Third Annual Meeting of the Woman’s Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Korea (1901, Seoul. May 9–14), 13.

63. “Biblewomen,” *The Korea Review*, 6, no. 4 (1906): 141.

64. In the description of the photo in the Methodist archive, the other missionary is identified as “Miss Bailer.” However, no missionary named Bailer was ever sent to the

Korea mission field. It is very likely that there is an error in the record and the person in the photograph is actually Blanche Bair, who was working in Haeju, where Gertrude Snavely was working prior to Bair's arrival in 1913.

65. A. Hamish Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990), 31.

66. Han'guk kidokkyo yōksa yōn'guso yōsōngsa yōn'guhoe, *Han'guk kyohoe chōndo puin charyojip* [A sourcebook on Bible women in the Korean Christian church] (Seoul: Han'guk kidokkyo yōksa yōn'guso, 1999), 332–33.

67. Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Patricia R. Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985); Leslie A. Flemming, ed., *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989); and Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996).

68. Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea*, 29–30.

69. A noteworthy effort in recording systematically the history of Korean Christian women was initiated by Han'guk kidokkyo yōk yōn'guso yōsōngsa yōn'guhoe. This research group compiled and published biographical notes of Korean Bible women who served in various locations until 1945. See *Han'guk kyohoe chōndo puin charyojip*. See also Yang Migang, "Ch'amyō wa paeje ūi kwanchōm esō pon chōndo puin e kwanhan yōn'gu: 1910-yōn-1930-yōndae rŭl chungsim uro" [A study of Bible women in terms of participation and exclusion: From the 1910s to the 1930s], *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yōksa*, 6 (1997): 139–79; Yang Migang, "Ch'ogi chōndo puin ūi sinang kwa hwaltong" [The faith and activities of early Bible women], *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yōksa*, 2 (1992): 91–109; Yang Hyōnhye, "Han'guk kaesin'gyo ūi sōng ch'abyōl kujo wa yōsōng undong" [The structure of sex discrimination in Korean Protestant Christianity and the women's movement], in *Han'guk yōsōng kwa kyohoeron*, ed. Ewha yōja taehakkyo yōsōng sinhak yōn'guso (Seoul: Taehan kidokkyosōhoe, 1998), 200–48. For the lack of attention to women missionaries in the West, Jane Hunter's *The Gospel of Gentility* was the seminal work that stimulated the topic further. See also Sandra Taylor, "Abby M. Colby: The Christian Response to a Sexist Society," *New England Quarterly*, 52, no. 1 (March 1979): 68–79. In this article, Taylor examines the life of Abby M. Colby, a missionary in Japan who spoke up for women's rights.

70. Karina Eileraas, "Reframing the Colonial Gaze: Photography, Ownership, and Feminist Resistance," *MLN*, 118 (2003): 807–40 (from 810). See also Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, 16.

71. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 10.

72. When W.H.T. Mitchell coined the phrase, the "pictorial turn," he emphasized that it is "not a return to naïve mimesis, copy or correspondence theories of representa-

tion” but a “rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visibility, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies, and figurality.” W.H.T. Mitchell, *Picture theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 16.

73. W. Arthur Noble, *Ewa: A Tale of Korea* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1906).

74. Yi Kyöngmin, *Kisaeng ün öttök'e mandürö chyönnün'ga: kündae kisaeng üi t'ansaeng kwa p'yosang konggan* [How was kisaeng created: The birth of modern kisaeng and the representational space] (Seoul: Sajin Ak'aibü Yünguso, 2005), 46–47. For an analysis of the novel, *Ewa*, see Hyaeweol Choi, “(En)Gendering a New Nation in Missionary Discourse: An Analysis of W. Arthur Noble’s *Ewa*,” *Korea Journal*, 46, no. 1 (2006): 139–69.