



The early generation of *Yanggongju* (western princess) and their life polemics in 1950-1955

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ABSTRACT

Yanggongju, the sexual workers for G.I. soldiers who were stationed in Korea particularly during and after Korean war, were stigmatized as 'bad women' for having sexual relationships out of marriage with foreign men. These women must endure hardships that came from the clients or the pimps in daily basis. This study aims to investigate how the life and polemics *yanggongju* had experienced in the period of 1950-1955. The early generations of *yanggongju* consisted of women with various backgrounds, such as war widows and women who became the breadwinner of the family. This study used qualitative method and the data were collected from the articles of *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, *Dong-a Ilbo*, and *Chosun Ilbo* in the period of January 1, 1950, to December 31, 1955, accessed from a news archive site called *naver news library*. After two-times process of data reduction, 47 articles were collected under the category of *nyu-sen* (news). It was found that the early generation of *yanggongju* experienced at least four kinds of polemics in their life: (1) life difficulties (physically and mentally), such as fallen women stigma, vulnerable to sexual transmitting disease, and having many debts, (2) child neglect in the form of attempted abortion and child abandonment, (3) suicide and abused, and (4) alcohol and drug (opium) addiction. It is hoped that this research can contribute to further researches on the problem of *yanggongju* and their position as a marginalized people.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The murder case of a *yanggongju* named Yoon Geum Yi by Kenneth Lee Markle in 1992 in Dongducheon, Gyeonggi-do, is one of a series of tragic events involving G.I. soldiers and *yanggongju* in the US military camps in South Korea. Yoon Geum Yi, who at that time was only twenty-six years old, was killed by Markle in a gruesome way. This case caught the attention of the Korean people at that time because of its long and complex judicial process, not to mention the limitation of South Korean authorities that could not fully prosecute the perpetrator. In addition, Markle as the perpetrator was released on parole a year earlier than his sentence. The day after his release, Markle returned to the United States and since then his whereabouts is unknown.¹ The unfortunate fate of Yoon Geum-Yi showed that the U.S. military camps in South Korea were unsafe, especially for those who became the breadwinner as *yanggongju*.

As explained by Moon in the book entitled *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S./Korea Relations in 1997* mentioned that when she grew up in South Korea, she was told that there are two categories of Korean women: the good women and the bad women. Those who are called as good women are the ones who become a good mother and a wise wife. Meanwhile the bad women are those who wear heavy eye make-ups and walk side by side with men in uniform. That bad women with heavy make-ups were *yanggongju* and the men in uniform were *yanggongju* or also known as western princesses were the G.I. soldiers who were stationed in South Korea.

Yanggongju is a term addressed to Korean women who worked to please foreign soldiers, particularly the U.S. soldiers who were stationed in South Korea (Park, 2016). *Yanggongju* in English is known as western princesses. These women started to appear when the G.I. soldiers were stationed in South Korea and the numbers increased after Korean war. It was recorded through a survey in 1950s and 1960s that there were sixty percent of Korean prostitutes worked in the U.S. military camptowns (Chong, 1969; Yi, 1964; Yi, 1976 in Lie, 1995). *Yanggongju* lived under the negative stigma from Korean society and received bad treatment by both the G.I. soldiers and the pimps/club owners in the camptown.

Their job to please the G.I. soldiers were against the Confucian values that Korean women should hold. *Yanggongju* also became the money machine for the prostitution business owners. For example, when a *yanggongju* sold a liquor for twenty dollars, she would only earn about two dollars while the pimp/bar owner would obtain those eighteen dollars (Pyun, 1988). This unfair commission distribution also applied to other drinks. In addition, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, and abortion also haunted *yanggongju* whenever they had to serve the soldiers.

Prostitution is not an unfamiliar thing in Korean society. In Joseon dynasty, there were *gisaeng*, the women who worked in a *gisaeng jib* (bar or club for the scholars) to please the aristocrats by serving them the liquor, dancing, singing, and doing the sexual intercourse. Meanwhile during the Japanese colonization, Korean women were forced to become *wianbu* or comfort women to serve Japanese soldiers sexually. In 1948, Korean government issued the amendment of a regulation to ban the prostitution. It was called *gongchangjedodeungpyejiryong*. According to this regulation, those who are involved in prostitution industry could be sentenced. However, the reality that happened in U.S. military camptowns with *yanggongju* was different from that regulation. The number of *yanggongju* in the camptowns increased, even their existence then became vital for Korean stability and security, particularly in the early period of Korean government.

As explained by Moon in the book entitled *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S./Korea Relations in 1997*, the issue of *yanggongju* was not widely discussed by academics at least until the early 1990s. *Yanggongju* was 'the invisible' figure because the academics are more concerned with the problem of underpaid Korean female workers. One of the reasons for this alienation is

¹ Go, Na-mu (2011, November 10). 윤금이 살해한 미군 범죄자는 지금 어디에 (Where is the US soldier who killed Yoon Geum-Yi now?). Hankyoreh. Retrieved from http://h21.hani.co.kr/arti/special/special_general/30782.html

the idea that *yanggongju* in the U.S. military camptowns are different from *nianbu* (comfort women) during the Japanese colonization. *Yanggongju* were considered as the women who did their sexual job for G.I. soldiers voluntarily. This indicates that being a *yanggongju* is not a compulsion. It was they themselves who choose to give up their chastity that should only be given to their husbands when they get married.

The limited interest of public and academics towards *yanggongju* issues does not mean that this topic is less worthy of discussion. The issue of *yanggongju* is a complicated matter because on the one hand, their existence was crucial for both Korean government and the G.I. soldiers in the early period of Korean government. More comprehensive research on the life of *yanggongju* needs to be done to dig more about their life, the problems they encountered in daily basis, as well as the public views, particularly in the early days of *yanggongju's* emergence. The previous studies about *yanggongju* were conducted in various discipline such as politics (Moon, 1997; Moon, 1998; Kim, 1998), history (Park, 2015), feminism (Lee, 2007; Lee, 2010; Lee, 2011; Lee, 2013), and literature (Park and Suh, 2009; Kim, 2006). Therefore, this study will complement the previous studies since it focuses more on the depiction of the early generation of *yanggongju* and their life polemics which were reflected in Korean newspaper articles in 1950-1955. This period was chosen because during 1950-1955 Korean war happened and U.S. military is the ally of South Korea. This momentum had made the number of *yanggongju* increased along with the number of *kijichon* around the U.S. military camps in South Korea.

2. METHOD

This research uses qualitative method to analyze the newspaper articles about *yanggongju* and their life polemics in the 1950-1955. According to Schreier (2012), qualitative research does not have standardization, yet requires active efforts from the researchers to interpret the data. This type of research focuses on material in the form of symbols such as verbal data, visual data, or artifacts that leave a large room for interpretation. Qualitative data consists of rich and complex data. As stated by Geertz in the book entitled 'Thick Description: Toward An Interpretive Theory of Culture' in 1973 in book by Miles et al entitled *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* in 2014, qualitative data has a clear of 'bold description'. In the process of analyzing the data, there are several steps that must be done to reach the conclusions. According to Miles and Huberman in the book entitled *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* in 1994, the steps including: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, (3) conclusion drawing and verification. Data collection and data analysis processes are not linear, but are interactive processes with one another (Rijali, 2018). Therefore, every process of qualitative data analysis is interconnected from the beginning to the end.

At the data collection stage, newspaper articles that were used as primary data came from three South Korean newspapers, namely *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, *Dong-a Ilbo*, and *Chosun Ilbo*. These three newspapers are some of the major daily newspapers in Korea. *Kyunghyang Shinmun* was established in 1946, while *Dong-a Ilbo* and *Chosun Ilbo* were established in 1920. In other words, these three major newspapers already exist since the beginning of Korean struggle for independence. Moreover, these newspapers have their news archived opened to the public. Newspaper articles were used to see how the media portrayed the early generations of *yanggongju* and the things that happened in their lives. The articles were obtained from a site called Naver News Library which is accessible for free. The site is a search engine for the archived articles from various Korean newspaper during the period 1920-1999. It also provides translations from Chinese characters (hanja) to *hangul* in each of its article texts that appear in a pop-up form. The keyword '*yanggongju*' in *hangul* characters is used to find the articles. Although *yanggongju* has several other names such as *yanggalbo* or *yangsaeksi*, in this study, the search for articles was only focused on entering the keyword '*yanggongju*'.

In the data reduction stage, the articles were sorted. Data reduction has some steps by conducting a strict selection of the collected data, making a summary or brief description, and

classifying it in the form of a wider pattern (Rijali, 2018). In this research, several steps of data reduction were conducted. The first one was based on the news category on the site and the second one was based on the content of the news articles. During the period from January 1, 1950, to December 31, 1955, one hundred and one articles were found containing the keyword 'yanggongju' in several categories such as *nyu-seu*, (news), *kihwoek/yeonjae* (serial), *gasip* (gossip), and *soseol* (novel). In this research, the article analysis is only focusing on the category on *nyu-seu* (news). After selecting the articles based on the categories, fifty-nine articles were selected. The second selection process was then carried out by reading the fifty-nine articles. After conducting the two data reduction processes, forty-seven articles about *yanggongju* were collected for extensive analysis. The following is the number of articles from each of the three newspapers regarding *yanggongju*.

Table 1.

Number of news articles about Yanggongju in 1950-1955 after the data reduction process

Name of the Newspaper	Period	Number of Articles
경향 신문 <i>Kyunghyang Shinmun</i>	1952-1955	26 articles
동아 일보 <i>Dong-a Ilbo</i>	1952-1955	8 articles
조선 일보 <i>Chosun Ilbo</i>	1952-1955	13 articles

The next stage the presentation of the data. This stage is also necessary because all of the information that has been compiled allows for conclusion to be drawn (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Rijali, 2018). As explained by Schutt in the book entitled *Investigating The Social World: The Process and Practice of Research in 2012*, the data can be presented in the form of graphs, charts, and matrix. In this research the data presentation is carried out in the form of matrix that can facilitate the coding and the categorization process. As explained by Gibbs in the book entitled *Analyzing Qualitative Data in 2007* in book by Schreier entitled *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice in 2012*, coding is conceptual process which and is useful for identifying the meaning of the data. This matrix is in the form of a table consisting of themes, categories, and content/important points of the analyzed news articles. This matrix serves to make it easier to show things that generally appeared in newspaper articles in 1950-1955 about *yanggongju* and their life polemics. At this stage, a more detailed explanation of the theme and category of the articles are presented in the discussion.

The final stage is drawing conclusion. At this stage, conclusions are drawn after the researcher begins to look for the meaning of the pattern, explanation, and causal path during the study (Rijali, 2018). The final conclusions may not appear after data collection is complete, depending on the size of corpus of fields notes, the coding used, the expertise of the researcher, and various other reasons (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, conclusions were drawn after the matrix presentation and a more detailed explanation were presented.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 *Yanggongju and Their Relation to the Stability of Korea as a Nation State*

Since the early 1990s, the topic of *yanggongju* and their position as a marginal people began to be researched by South Korean and overseas academia. The existence of 'demand' and 'supply' made the existence of *yanggongju* and prostitution in the U.S. military camptowns not easily eroded, and both had roles related to one another.

Yanggongju is a term for Korean women who worked to please the foreign soldiers, especially the G.I. soldiers since the early days they were stationed in the U.S. military camps in South Korea. *Yanggongju*, which had role mainly to accompanying the soldiers, were the marginal people with the lowest social status in Korean society. They are also often referred as 'yangsaeksi', 'yanggalbo', 'yankee whore', 'UN Lady', or 'western princesses'. However, according to Kim Hyun-sook in the

book entitled *Yanggongju As an Allegory of The Nation: Images of Working-Class Women in Popular and Radical Texts in 1998*, this term does not apply to those who work as prostitute for Korean men.

After Korean war, the definition of *yanggongju* was expanded to also include the women who married the G.I. soldiers (Kwak, 2019). They were known as the G.I. brides. These women were also known as *hwanhyangnyeo*, which means 'the fallen women/the home-coming women' (Hoang, 1999; Kim & Choi, 1998). The term comes from a Chinese character that describes Korean women who were sent as tribute to the Qing dynasty in the 17th century. *Hwanhyangnyeo* and *yanggongju* represented two types of colonized women: *hwanhyangnyeo* as a tribute for Qing dynasty, while *yanggongju* as voluntary sexual workers for G.I. soldiers. As explained by Yuh in the book entitled *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America in 2002*, in fact there were also women who became *yanggongju* because they were forcibly recruited by pimps or cheated by being lured to a job with nice pay. However, both *hwanhyangnyeo* and *yanggongju* shared the same stigma: broken women. This was because both had experienced sexual encounters with several men. *Yanggongju* became a 'medium' for foreign soldiers to channel their sexual desires.

The position of *yanggongju* as the sexual workers for G.I. soldiers showed that they did not have the full control over themselves. It is not an exaggeration to say that *yanggongju* are the people who were 'colonized in a free place.' Their image as sexual workers put them in mixed situation to blend in with the society. The image of a 'barbarian' group attached to the colonized people makes them ostracized worthless as human beings. According to Salter in the book entitled *Barbarians and Civilization in International Relations in 2002*, barbarians are identified as feminine, while the colonizers are masculine. The feminine is the inferiors and the masculine is the superiors. More specifically, colonized women were seen by the colonizers as hyper-feminine, non-domestic, and too vulgar. According to McClintock in book by Salter entitled *Barbarians and Civilization in International in 2002*, sexual stereotypes are generally pinned to describe colonized women. They are depicted as the medium for procreation and symbolically associated with the land (power) that belongs to the men. This stereotype undermines the dignity of colonized women who should have independent life and control over their bodies.

Yanggongju did his work in a place called *kijichon*, or also known as military camptown. About this, Lee Na-young (2010) explained that facility is the reason for the existence of *kijichon*. The Korean government set up rest and recreation camp facilities around military bases for the U.S. soldiers so that they did not need to fly to Japan on their day-off. Even though the people in prostitution industry could be sentenced based on the law, the practice of prostitution in the *kijichon* was inevitable at that time. As explained by Yuh in the book entitled *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America in 2002* the sexual needs of young G.I. soldiers were unavoidable, let alone the desire to have sexual intercourse with local women. In addition, the facilities, and the locations these soldiers used for rest and recreation were the same as those used during the Japanese colonization (Lee, 2010). It is not an exaggeration to say that this prostitution activities would not be doing well if the facilities and the systems were limited. In other words, the role of supporting facilities, the demand from G.I. soldiers, the implicit support from Korean government, and the need for *yanggongju* to earn money are some important factors that support the sustainability of the prostitution industry around the military camps.

The number of *yanggongju* and *kijichon* increased rapidly around the 1950s. This was unavoidable since the facilities inherited from the Japanese colonization were reused when the U.S. soldiers were stationed in Korea. Therefore, the revival of prostitution in the military environment did not take long despite the changes of power. The first *kijichon* was established in Bupyeong in 1945 Lee (2010) and Norma (2022) which in the 1930s was also used by the Japanese soldiers as a place for prostitution.

The location of *kijichon* spread throughout South Korea such as in Shinyongsan, Nanam, Jinhae, Haiyaliya Texas in Busan, Yongjugol in Paju, Ssukgogae in Pyeongtaek, Munsan, Dongduchon in Uijongbu (Lee, 2007). *Kijichon* consisted of various places such as bars, massage

parlors, and dancing venues. The Japanese soldiers used this place prior to the independence of Korea. According to the article from *Chosun Ilbo*, published on July 27, 1953, it was recorded that there were about twenty thousand *yanggongju* in the Seoul area. During the Korean war, G.I. soldiers who had to move from one place to another were still able to have sexual intercourse with *yanggongju* outside the *kejichon*. These *yanggongju* carried blankets wherever they moved and did the business in the mountains. As mentioned by Yuh in the book entitled *Beyond the Shadow of Camp town: Korean Military Brides in America in 2002*, these women were the forerunner of the blanket squad, a name for a group of women who followed G.I. soldiers from one place to another during the war.

Hoang (1999) and See (2022) analyzed three factors behind the emergence of prostitution in the U.S. military camps. These factors have several aspects that influence each other. In other words, *yanggongju* is not the only party that gave life to the existence of *kejichon*.

The first factor is the existence of *yanggongju* was considered as the protection for respectable/good women from being raped by the foreign soldiers. In other words, *yanggongju* were seen as people who sacrificed their body to protect the women outside *kejichon*. This idea and situation similarly happened in Joseon dynasty. According to (Yi, 1970 in Hoang, 1999), The existence of *kisaeng* in Joseon society had the role to restrain Joseon man to seduce the wives of the people. The dichotomy between 'bad women' and 'good women' placed *yanggongju* in the position of being not worthy of protection. *Yanggongju* did their work as sexual workers to fulfill their needs and at the same time, with or without realizing it, performed the role of being 'the protectors.' However, this activity was considered to have a social impact to protect women outside *kejichon* from harassment by G.I. soldiers. *Yanggongju* who became the medium for the soldiers to channel their sexual needs were expected to prevent the chaos caused by the G.I. soldiers who were unable to contain themselves.

The second factor is the role of *yanggongju* in maintaining the national security by entertaining the soldiers. The Korean government at that time used prostitution to maintain good relations with the U.S. as ally. In this regard, both the Korean government and the U.S. military showed their duality to the existence of *yanggongju*. On the other hand, the U.S. military considered that prostitution has a bad influence on their soldiers. As explained by Yuh in the book entitled *Beyond the Shadow of Camp town: Korean Military Brides in America in 2002* yet, prostitution in their military camps in Korea only needed a 'wink' as a sign of recognition.

The third factor is the economic value of prostitution industry in *kejichon* that helped to boost the economy of Korea. *Yanggongju* were considered as 'national hero' who protected 'good women' and at the same time contributed to the economic development and the security of the country by their services for the G.I. soldiers. Sex tourism was a major source of foreign income at that time, despite its controversy. In line with this idea, Kim Ok-yeop on an essay called 'The Trend of Family Systems and Sexual Issues in 1931' in book by Kim entitled *Korean Women: A Sourcebook in 2017*, stated that the degradation of the sacred value of Korean society and the commercialization of sex through prostitution represents the logic growth of capitalism. Economic interests provoke the commercialization of sex and male domination of women are reflected on the case of *yanggongju*.

As for *yanggongju*, the notion of being 'heroes' for 'good women' in Korea and for the government because of their role in helping the economic development of the country, was not a compliment. As mentioned by Yuh in the book entitled *Beyond the Shadow of Camp town: Korean Military Brides in America in 2002*, for *yanggongju*, there is nothing special about working for the soldiers. The sexual exploitation of *yanggongju* happened because of the role of many parties under the name of security. The stigma arose in society regarding *yanggongju* as 'dirty/bad women' attached throughout life, making it difficult for *yanggongju* to return to the society even when they succeed to escape from that work.

3.2 *The Early Generation of Yanggongju and Their Life Polemics in 1950-1955 Identified from Korean News Articles*

After sorting and analyzing forty-seven articles from three newspapers, namely *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, *Dong-a Ilbo*, and *Chosun Ilbo* which were accessed through the Korean newspaper archives website, naver news library, it was found that there are four general topics related to depiction of the life of *yanggongju*. The four topics are: (1) life difficulties for both physically and mentally, (2) child neglect, (3) the death, and (4) alcohol and drug (opium) addiction. The life of *yanggongju* when working in bars or cafes in *kijichon* were vulnerable to their physical, psychological, and material exploitation by the G.I. soldiers as customers and pimps as bar or cafe owners. In addition, their life was also very close to unwanted pregnancies, drug addiction, and death. It should be noted that the articles about *yanggongju* on the website started to appear in 1952. Therefore, the information about their life, specifically in 1950-1951 could not be found.

Table 2.

Number of news articles about Yanggongju in 1950-1955 after the data reduction process

General Topics	Content Classification
	Susceptible to sexual transmitting disease (STD)
Life difficulties	Stigmatized as 'bad women' and morally corrupted
	Having a lot of debts
Child neglect	Having abortion attempts
	Child abandonment
	Suicide attempts
Suicide and abused	Became a victim of murderer
	Died because of accidents
Alcohol and drug addiction	Opium addiction

3.2.1 *Life Difficulties*

The early generations of *yanggongju* basically consisted of women with pitiful backgrounds. According to Yuh in the book entitled *Beyond the Shadow of Camptown: Korean Military Brides in America in 2002*, poverty was very close to the lives of Korean people, particularly between the 1940s and 1970s. There were women who have been in the world of prostitution before, war widows or orphans who had zero income, or women who had lost their chastity for being raped by their male relatives. After the independence in 1945, the separation of North side and South side of Korea under the 38 parallel, the South Korean government and economic aspects were unstable. The presence of U.S. military who became an ally for South Korea indirectly opened the opportunities to generate money even in an unusual way.

As mentioned earlier, *yanggongju* worked in *kijichon* because of their financial problem. The desire of these women to work for a decent income was in fact not proportional to the job opportunities that could be accessed by women at that time. Apart from voluntarily worked in *kijichon*, women who became *yanggongju* enter the world of prostitution by being forcibly kidnapped by pimps or being lured to false jobs such as being a shopkeeper or an artist.

전쟁미망인은 생활고를 타개하기 위해서 윤락의 길을 걷고 노부모와 어린 동생을 기르기 위해서 어린 소녀가 소위 양공주가 된 사례를 왕 볼수는 있었다.

(동아일보, 1955년 6월

22 일)

We can see the example of war widow who chose prostitution to overcome financial difficulties and teenagers who became yanggongju as breadwinner for their old parents and their brothers and sisters.

Yanggongju who did not have money then worked in a cafe or bar with an unfair commission distribution by the bar or cafe owner. *Yanggongju* were also trapped in a huge debt with the bar owner.

소녀는 서울서 피난하여 부산으로 왔사옵고 혹심한 생활난에 허덕이다가 어린 동생 중학 입학을 시킬 결심으로 몸을 개천에 던지고 차금 150 만원을 받고 외군 상대의 위안부가 되었다고 나락에 빠지게 된 동기를 말한 다음 아무리 갖은 고초와 경멸을 받으면서도 이자금을 벗어날 수 없는 특수한 계산법은 알 먹고 썩 먹는 격의 포주의간악한 간계에 의한 것이라고 포주의 간악면을 눈물로 호소하고 자기는 요행 미군 상사의 구원을 받아 간신히 해방됐지만 아직도 생지옥 소굴에서 허덕이고 있는 수만 명에 달하는 동지의 신변 구원을 위해 철저히 포주들의 기름진 배를 쳐단해 달라고 하소연하였다.

(경향신문, 1953년 6월 29일)

That girl fled from Seoul to Busan. After experiencing the difficulties due to poverty, she decided to enter Gaecheon so that her young brother could attend Junior High School by receiving a loan of 1.5 million and became wianbu for foreign soldiers. After talking about her motive for entering this world, the girl burst into tears. She says that the evil side of pimps and the way of counting that he has so that this girl cannot escape from high interest debt even though she has gone through many difficulties.

From the news articles above, it is shown that *yanggongju* still lived in a cycle of poverty even though they earned money due to the exploitation by their pimps. The debt they had must be paid with high interest so that no matter how hard they worked, it would still difficult if they had a lot of debts. As explained by Yuh in the book entitled *Beyond the Shadow of Camp town: Korean Military Brides in America in 2002*, that one of the sources of this debt was the cost of the room which was deducted from their income. Therefore, paying the debt was almost impossible to do for *yanggongju*.

Besides debts, *yanggongju* who had to serve many soldiers every day from drinking to having sexual intercourse were susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases (STD). About this, the U.S. military were very sensitive to keep their soldiers from being infected to sexual diseases. The U.S. military required *yanggongju* to be examined at a health clinic or hospital and were not allowed to work unless they were declared 'clean' by the health workers.

그런데 여자 경찰서 통계에 의하면 이들의 근 90%가 성병을 보유하고 있어 우리나라 앞날에 일대경종을 울리고 있는 것이다.

(경향신문, 1952년 4월 20일)

But according to the statistical data from female police, about 90% of them are infected to sexual transmitting disease. This is an alert for the future of our country.

The examination for sexually transmitted diseases was carried out specifically for women. For those who were examined, their secrecy was not guaranteed. Unlike the soldiers who had their identities unrevealed even when they were affected by the disease, *yanggongju* had zero clue which of the soldiers that were infected. *Yanggongju* were also charged for all the bills of the examination and the treatment until they were declared clean. The cost was not cheap yet causing *yanggongju* to borrow money from the pimps and the cycles of debts never met the end.

Having sexual relationship before marriage with a Korean man is already shameful, let alone being a *yanggongju* for the G.I. soldiers. The intimacy of *yanggongju* and the soldiers was unusual for Korean society, particularly after the independence and the Korean war. As explained by Shin in the book entitled *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* in 2006, president Syngman Rhee at that time also announced the concept of *ilmin chuui* which stated that Korea is a single entity that shares the same lineage, the same ideology, and the same fate. This concept directly or indirectly influenced the way of thinking of Korean people about *yanggongju*. In addition, the some of *yanggongju* also gave birth to the children with mixed race, known as *bonbyeol-a*.

이 방에서는 미군과의 좋게 손을 맞잡고 들어오는 한국 여성이 있어도 평범한 눈으로 봐야하는 풍속이 언제부터인가 생기고 말았다. 감동이 어린애를 안고 들어온 우울한 양공주나 껌을 짹짹 씹는 경쾌한 모습의 여인이 나타나도 신기로운 눈으로 봐서는 안되는 이국적인 표정이 흐르는 곳이다.

(경향신문, 1955년 9월

11일)

In this room, I do not know since when the view of this Korean women who entered this room holding hands with the U.S. soldiers became an ordinary thing. This is a place to show duality because you are not allowed to look at the sad yanggongju who hold her black child or the yanggongju eating chewing gum with strange stares.

Yanggongju with the stigma of 'bad women' were not considered as the part of the society. *Yanggongju* were too different because they did not keep their chastity and instead 'give themselves up' for foreign men. Their behavior that goes against the concept of chastity and virginity of Korean women in general put them in a difficult situation even after escaping from the prostitution works.

3.2.2 Child Neglect

The polemic that also arose for *yanggongju* was the unwanted pregnancy. This pregnancy created another problem, some of which were born but then abandoned and some of them were aborted. The economic difficulties made *yanggongju* had to choose the shortcuts to abort the fetus or abandoned the child who had been born on the street or in the church. The endless cycle of

debts, the lack of job opportunities for women, and the irresponsibility shown by the father made it more difficult for *yanggongju* to be able to raise their children. In a news article published by *Dong-a Ilbo* on September 5, 1955, it is mentioned that the increasing number of abortions showed the dark side of the society at that time.

가난으로 말미암은 불안한 세정과 함께 요즘 갑자기 자기 자식을 낳고도 자식으로 기르지 않고 남몰래 길가에 버려 놓고 숨어 다니는 불행한 여인군이 나날이 늘어가 어두운 사회상의 일면을 보여주고 있다.

(동아일보, 1955년
9월 5일)

Along with the poverty and the instability of our government, the numbers of miserable yanggongju who suddenly gave birth to their child these days and then raised them and then abandoned them secretly, increasing. It shows the dark side of the society.

There were also cases when *yanggongju* conspired with the doctor to abort even a large womb. In an article published by *Dong-a Ilbo* on September 27, 1955, *yanggongju* collaborated with a doctor to abort her nine-months old pregnancy. After the fetus was removed, the fetus was then strangled with a stick until he/she died.

지난 8월 3-일 서울시 마포구 신공동에서 양부인 노릇을 하고 있는 함모 (38)는 9개월이나된 "태아"를 유산시키기 위하여 인천시 산곡동 1번지에서 개업을 하고 있는 덕인 병원에 지난 8월 26일 입원하고 5일째인 8월 30일 밤 9시부터 수술을 시작하여 새벽 3시경에야 비로서 수술을 끝마치었는데 출생한 영아는 반흑색종인 남 아이였다는 바 산모와 의사인 장석주 (36)은 서로 공모하여 의사인 장이 영아를 죽일 목적으로 영아 목을 "봉대"로 졸라매어 사망케하였다 한다.

(동아일보, 1955년 9월
27일)

On August 3, a pregnant yanggongju with the initials Ham (38 years old) went to Deokin Hospital in 1-Sangok-dong, Incheon-si to have abortion. She was admitted to the hospital on August 26 and five days after that, on August 30, the operation was performed at nine in the evening and finished at three in the next morning. The baby born had half melanoma. The mother and the doctor named Jang Seok-ju (36 years) made an agreement and the doctor strangled the baby's neck with a 'stick' and the baby was killed.

Abortion and child abandonment created new problems for Korea at that time. The mixed-race children who were abandoned by their mothers often lived in orphanages or were adapted by foreign families overseas. Just like their mother, the mixed-race children also had been discriminated by the society since they had half of the blood of foreigners. So, it was difficult for them to be acknowledged as Korean. As explained by Widyana in the research entitled Alienated Hybrid Children in Korea During the 1950s in 2019, although the mixed-race children at that time spoke Korean and ate Korean food in their daily basis, their physical appearance were different from Koreans in general, which makes them labeled as 'foreigners' by Korean society.

3.2.3 *Suicide and Abused*

Physical and psychological abuse were very close with *yanggongju*. Whether it was self-harm or suicide, being injured or even killed by the soldiers, or the incidental death haunted their life. Incidents of mistreatment or murder case by G.I. soldiers who were drunk or involved in fights often resulted *yanggongju* as victims. It is reflected on the article published by the *Chosun Ilbo* about *yanggongju* who was stabbed in the right hand by a drunken soldier while standing by the door.

...문 옆에 서있는 양공주 박숙자 (24) 양의 오른편 팔을 찌르고...

(조선일보, 1954년
8월 3일)

...Park Suk-ja (24 years old) who were standing by the door, was stabbed on her right hand...

The miserable life made *yanggongju* chose the last resort to be free from all the burden they had. In an article from *Kyungbyang Shinmun* on September 9, 1955, it was mentioned that *yanggongju* decided to do suicide by drinking the poison.

지난 8월 31일하오 6시경 인천시 산곡동에 거주하는 이 양공주는 부양가족으로 인해 약 3년이라는 양공주 생활을 하여 오다 비관한 나머지 다량의 독약을 먹고 자살 하였다.

(경향신문, 1955년 9월
9일)

On August 31, at 6 PM, a woman who lived at Sangok-dong, Incheon-si was found death by drinking a large amount of poison. She has been living as yanggongju for about three years as to support her family.

In another article published by *Dong-a Ilbo* on September 27, 1955, there was also a *yanggongju* who tried to commit suicide by drinking poisonous liquid medicine. She chose that shortcut because she has been abandoned by a G.I. soldier who was her customer. The economic and personal problems were sensitive things for *yanggongju*. The expectation of being able to earn money for her life and family was contradictory with the unfair commission distribution. Even the hope of being loved by an American man after becoming *yanggongju* had eroded when the man abandoned her.

3.2.4 *Alcohol and drugs addiction*

The last thing that depicts the life of *yanggongju* is alcohol and drugs addiction. For *yanggongju*, alcohol and drugs were two inevitable things from their life as sexual workers in the camptowns. The bar owners required *yanggongju* to sell liquor as many as possible to the guests. When the guests kept drinking, it also meant that these women had to continue drinking. As explained by Moon in the book entitled *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S./Korea Relations in 1997*, on average, *yanggongju* had about twenty glasses of soft drinks or mixed alcoholic beverages each night.

그런데 전기 25%중에는 남자가 5% 여자가 20%로 여자가 절대다수를 차지하고 있는데 여자들의 대부분은 양공주 및 유한층의 여성이라고 한다.

(경향신문, 1955년 7월
13일)

However, from 25%, 5% are men and the remaining dominant 20% are occupied by women. Most of these women are yanggongju and limited/ special class women.

As stated in *Kyunghyang Shinmun's* article above, female drugs addict was dominated by *yanggongju* and special class women. *Yanggongju* used drugs to help them serve the soldiers to have sexual intercourses. According to Moon in the book entitled *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S./Korea Relations in 1997*, *yanggongju* came to work in a bar, club, or a cafe in *kejiichon* with little knowledge of the relationship they would have with the soldiers. The initiation process was needed to get *yanggongju* prepared on serving the soldiers by being raped by the club owners or sent by club or bar owners to serve certain soldiers. However, this continuous used of drugs turned *yanggongju* as an addict and died because of overdose.

지난 24 일하오 10 시경 영등포대로상에 방치된 변사체의 주인공 양공주 박순애 (26)양의 사인을 규명 중에 있던 수사진에서 박 양이 마약 아편 중독자라는 것을 인정하게 되어 마약 취급상인들을 조사수색한결과 박 양의 사인을 마약 주사로 인한 '심장마비'로 판명되었다고 한다. 이로써 박 양의 시체를 대로 상에 유기한 것은 마약 상인의 소행으로 밝혀졌다고 한다.

(동아일보, 1955년 6월

28 일)

The detective investigated the cause of death of a yanggongju named Park Soon-ae (26 years old), whose body was left on Yeongdeungpo-daero street on the 24th at around 10 PM last night. It was discovered that Park was an opium addict. Park died of a heart attack due to a drug injection. It also stated that drug dealers were responsible for dumping Park's body on the street.

Heart attacks and abandonment of corpses showed that they *yanggongju* remained as marginalized people and were not treated well even when they died. Their position as a group of women who no longer maintain chastity and virginity makes them exploited materially, physically, and mentally, not only by the soldiers who enjoy their services, but also by those who became the club owners and by the government at that time to generate income for the development of the country.

3.3 Discussion

Yanggongju in the 1950-1955 had faced difficulties in daily basis, both physically and mentally. Based on the results on newspaper articles in the previous part, their struggle did not only come from the obligation to earn money, but also from the clients and the pimps who treat them as sexual objects and money machine. These results confirm the previous studies about the life of *yanggongju* in daily basis. As explained by Moon in the book entitled *Sex Among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S./Korea Relations in 1997* for instances, *yanggongju* and their work are close to drugs and alcohol addiction. *Yanggongju* drank alcohol or used drugs to ease the tension whenever they served the soldiers. This act as alcohol and drug addicts brought *yanggongju* to have miserable life even after they faced the death. As mentioned in an article from *Dong-a Ilbo* on June 28, 1955, the corpse of a drug-addict-*yanggongju* was found on the street after being abandoned by the drug dealers. Not to mention about *yanggongju* who also aborted their child so that they can work as usual, or *yanggongju* who were labelled as 'bad women' since they interacted with the G.I. soldiers.

4. CONCLUSION

The early generation of *yanggongju*, precisely when G.I. soldiers were stationed in Korea, consisted of women with diverse background such as war widows or young women who became the breadwinner of the family. However, these women shared the same struggle: poverty. *Yanggongju* were not only a group of women who voluntarily worked as sexual workers, but also women who were kidnapped or sold to pimps, or those who were tricked into being lured into false jobs such as shopkeepers, singers, or artists. The *yanggongju* position as sexual workers for G.I. soldiers led them to be ostracized by society and called 'bad women' for having sexual relationships with foreign men.

This study which used qualitative data analysis method collected articles from the newspapers such *Kyunghyang Shinmun*, *Dong-a Ilbo*, and *Chosun Ilbo* in the period of January 1, 1950, to December 31, 1955. After the data reduction process was carried out twice, forty-seven articles were collected under the *nyu-seu* (news) category which were then analyzed to see how *yanggongju* in early generation lived and the polemics they had experienced. After analyzing the newspaper article, it was found that *yanggongju* had (1) life difficulties such as stigma of 'bed women, susceptible to sexually transmitted disease, and having a lot of debts, (2) child neglect in the form of attempted abortion and child abandonment, (3) suicide and abused, and (4) alcohol and drug addiction.

This study only focuses on newspaper articles about *yanggongju* in 1950-1955 which can be accessed on the website called Naver news library under the *nyu-seu* (news) category. Some parts of the articles were quite difficult to understand made the analysis process took relatively more time. In addition, the newspaper articles collected only came from one keyword '*yanggongju*', so the number of articles obtained were also limited. Therefore, this study only discusses the life of the early generation of *yanggongju* and the polemics of their life, does not discuss in more detail of the relationship between *yanggongju* and Korean nationalism or problems that arises regarding *yanggongju* and their mixed-race children. It is hoped that this research can contribute to further researches on the problem of *yanggongju* and their position as a marginalized people. In addition, it is also hoped the shortcomings contained in this study can be complemented in other relevant studies.

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